

TAFSIR OF SURA INSAAN

S. Noor

Chapter 1: Introduction:

This chapter or sura has thirty one verses. It is also known as Surah Dahr, Surah "This sura was revealed in Madina. The beginning of this sura is connected to the family of the holy Prophet Muhammad^(saw)

The Holy Prophet ^(saw) said;

"Whoever recites this surah, his reward will be heaven and heavenly garments."

(majma al bayan vol 10 pg402)

Imam Baqir ^(a.s) said;

"Whoever recites Sura Insaan every Thursday morning their reward is that they will be with the holy Prophet ^(saw) on the Day of Judgment."

Not everyone will have the honor of being resurrected along with the Holy Prophet ^(saw) on the Day of Judgment. Paradise has different levels. While many people may go to paradise, not everyone will be with the Holy Prophet ^(saw) which will be in the highest level in Paradise. This is a great opportunity! Recite sura Insaan every Thursday morning, once a week, but remember not only to recite, but to also to reflect over the words and practice the guidance given in this chapter!

Session 1: Bismillah-ir-rahman-ir-rahim

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Almost all scholars unanimously hold the opinion that Bismillah-ir-rahman-ir-rahim is a part of all Suras (chapters) of the Qur'an (except chapter 9- At-Tawbah).

Basically, the presence of Bismillah in the beginning of all the chapters in the text of the Quran is itself proof of this issue since we do know that nothing has been added to the text of the Qur'an and the mention of Bismillah, at the start of all but one chapters, has been prevalent since the time of the holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) till today.

One of the companions of Imam as-sadiq (as) says: "I asked Imam Sadiq (as): 'When I stand for prayers, should I recite 'Bismillah' in the beginning of Sura Al- Fatiha?'

The Imam said: 'Yes'. I questioned him once again: 'When al-Fatiha is completed and I begin to recite another chapter after it, do I have to recite 'Bismillah'? Again he (as) said: 'Yes.'"

It is narrated from the holy Prophet (saw): "My people are accounted for their deeds in the Hereafter, and their good deeds are superior to the bad deeds. The past nations will cry out, 'Why do their few good deeds exceed their mountain of bad deeds?' The prophets of those nations will answer; 'Because their speech has begun with three of Allah's names: Allah, the All-beneficent (Rahman), and the All-merciful (Rahim). These three names are greater in weight than all the virtues and vices of mankind."

Shaheed Murtaza Mutahhari in his book 'Understanding the Noble Qur'an' writes the reason why we begin in the name of Allah (swt). He says "It is for the purpose of giving that act a sacred touch and making it blessed. When a human being who has a natural sentiment from Allah and considers Him a holy essence and a source of all Grace, begins an act in His name, it means that owing to His sanctity, nobility and greatness, the action to become sacred."

The word بِسْمِ can analyzed as;

ب Bi which has several meanings- by, for, with the aid of, through or by means of . It also points toward that which happens next.

اسم *Ism* indicates the means by which something is distinguished, in this case a name,

الله *Allah* which is the Arabic name of the One and only

The word Allah is the most complete and comprehensive name among the Lord's many names. This is because each of Allah's (swt): names, which are found in the Holy Qur'an, as well as in other Islamic sources, reflects one particular aspect of Allah's (swt): Attributes.

In other words, the only name that refers to all of His Attributes combined is Allah. That is why other names are often used as modifiers for the word 'Allah'. This is evident when one accepts Islam as his faith, he has to recite la: ilaha illala (There is no god, but Allah). Other names like Al- Kḥaliq(the creator) Al Karim(the kind) and others cannot be substituted in the proclamation as evidence of Monotheism in Islam.

الرحمن *The word Ar-Rahman (The beneficent) is an adjective derived from Rahma (Mercy). This word refers to the General Mercy of Allah which is bestowed upon all creatures-whether they are believers, disbelievers, good-doers or evildoers.*

الرحيم *The word Ar-Rahim (The Merciful) refers to that Specific Mercy that is blessed only upon the believing and obedient servants-The believers, because of their true belief, good actions, and faithful active obedience, deserve this special and exclusive mercy of which the disbelievers are deprived of.*

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Tabarsi narrates from Imam Musa Ibn Ja'far (as); 'There's no grief-stricken individual who says 'bismillahir-rahmanir-rahim' three times while looking up to the sky, where in return Allah (swt) eliminates his grief, if he so wills. Makarim al-Akhlaq: 346, Bihar al-Anwar: 92/ 159, Bab 15.

*Another tradition narrates;
A dua or supplication which begins with bismillahir-rahmanir-rahim will not be rejected by Allah (swt) Mustadrak al-Wasa'il: 5/ 304, Bab 16, tradition 5929*

It has been narrated that there was once a lady who always recited bismillahir-rahmanir-rahim before she did anything. She knew that Allah (swt) would then always be with her. Her husband did not believe in this and would always taunt her and laugh at her.



One day, she put her ring in the cupboard and as usual she recited bismillahir-rahmanir-rahim before she put it away. She knew that it would be safe. Her husband happened to see her putting the ring in the cupboard. In an effort to prove her wrong, he took the ring and threw it in the river. He thought to himself that in a few days he would ask his wife about her ring and ultimately prove her wrong about her belief and faith in bismillahir-rahmanir-rahim.

The next morning, the lady went to the market. She bought fish that was just brought in by the fishermen. When she was cleaning the fish at home, she was astounded to find her ring inside the stomach of the fish. She was amazed at how it got there, when she had put it in the cupboard. Never the less, the lady thanked Allah (swt) put the ring back in its place in the cupboard.

That evening, when her husband came back from work, he asked her where the ring was. He began smiling when his wife got up and went to the cupboard, but almost fell over when his wife presented him the ring. The visibly shaken husband told his wife of what he had done and apologized to her.

Another true story is related to a well-known and pious scholar Sayed Murtada who used to reside in the old neighborhood of Baghdad, Iraq. This part of Baghdad, was separated by the river Tigris, to the other part of the city known as "New Baghdad". There was a bridge that used to connect this two parts of the city. The bridge would open in the mornings and close for the public in the evenings.

Sayed Murtada used to run his classes in the mosque of the neighborhood of Karb in old Baghdad. One of his students was a resident of New Baghdad. He used to attend daily, but was always arriving late when generally the day's class would have ended or was more than half way through. The student was very worried about this and approached Sayed Murtada to seek his guidance and help. He explained to the Sayed that the reason for coming late was that he had to wait for the bridge to open and then cross it come to class. This invariably made him late for the classes every day. He requested Sayed Murtada to find a solution for his problem.

Sayed Murtada wrote something on a piece of paper folded it and gave the paper to the student and instructed him to keep the paper on him and on what to do when he came to the river. But he warned the student not to open the folds of the paper.



The next morning as usual the student reached the river bank, to find the bridge was not opened yet for people to cross the river. He put his feet in the waters of the river, even his footwear didn't get wet and he was astonished to walk across to the other bank comfortably as if he was walking on the dry land. Now it became his daily routine to walk across the river to attend his school.

One day it came into his inquisitive mind to find out what was written by his mentor on that piece of paper. He thought that if he learned about the supplication written on the paper, he might be able to help others as well. He opened the paper and found that only these words were written on it: "Bismillah hir Rahman ir Rahim" The student could not believe that only these 3 words were scribbled on the paper that caused the miraculous results. This made him doubtful and uncertain.

The next morning as the student prepared to walk on the water, with the paper in his hand he noticed that soon as he put his foot in the water he felt his foot sink into the water and that he would fall in. Worrying that he could drown, he withdrew his foot from the water and waited for the bridge to open.

When the students reached the school late, he sat quietly in the class without uttering a word to Sayed Murtada. But Sayed Murtada knew what happened and told the student "You have gone against my instruction. The supplication will not benefit you any more!"

Lessons learnt from this verse

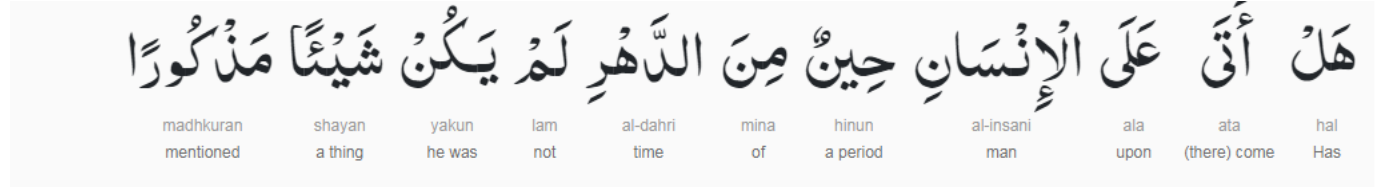
We should Ponder over the power of bismillahir-rahmanir-rahim

Recite Bismillahir-rahmanir-rahim as often as possible before eating, before sleeping and before starting any work,

Faith is the key in everything. Just as the lady had faith in the power of Bismillahir-rahmanir-rahim

Chapter 3: Surah Insaan verse 1

Even though this chapter speaks about the hereafter, it begins by speaking about the creation of humans because the ultimate destination of every human being will be the hereafter.



Has there been for man a period of time when he was not anything worthy of mention?

الْإِنْسَانِ *Al-insaan* is the plural of the word **Naas** which means **man**. The origin of the word is from **Nisyaan** which means forgetfulness. Human beings are forgetful beings! We become so engrossed in our lives, that we forget who brought us in this world and why. We think we are special, but we forget there was a time we weren't even worth mentioning!

حِينٌ *Hinun* means “a period,” It may be short or long period

لَدَّهْرِ *Dhar* means an unlimited time. A time without a specified beginning or end

مَّذْكُورًا *Madhkuran* means worth mentioning. But because of **لَمْ** *Lam* the sentence means **not worth mentioning**.

For a period of time the tiny essential particles or atoms of a man's being were scattered in different places all over the earth. There could have been a mention of earth, heaven, land, sea and so on, but not a mention of a human being, as humans did not exist. Humans were still not created, that is why they were not worthy of mention. But, after man was created and brought into this world then he became worthy of mention.

An example would be a car. Before they were invented, the particles that comprise all the parts of the car existed. Cars are made up of Aluminium, Bismuth, copper, Carbon, Magnesium, gold etc. These elements existed by themselves. They were then mined, processed and brought together to make a car. A few hundred years ago nobody knew of a car. Today, everybody knows a car when it is mentioned.

Imam Baqir (as), has said that that man's existence was known only to Allah (swt), and hence man was not mentioned as being an entity until Allah (swt) created him in his present physical form.

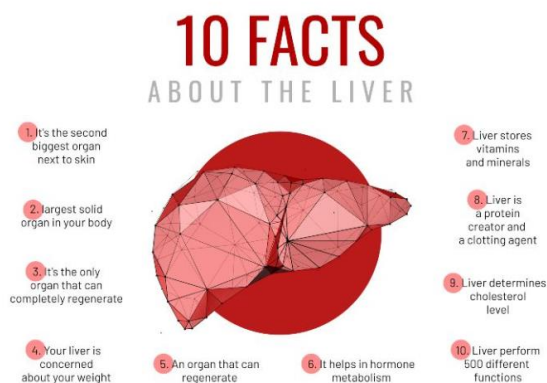
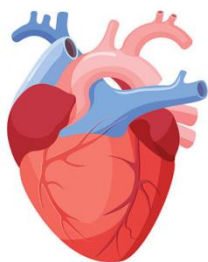
POINTS TO PONDER

Should we not thank Allah (swt) for creating us and making us worthy of mention? Let us ponder over the way we have been designed, our organs and the functions that they perform day in and day out, year after year.



Let us ponder over where for example our nose is located. Just above our mouth. Why? So we can smell the food that we are about to consume. The good smell of the food stimulates our appetite that makes us want to eat. If the food is bad, we will reject that food and stop it from entering our system before it makes us ill. The nose has also been placed between our eyes so that light is equally split between both eyes.

Our heart is a muscle. It pumps blood all around our body, supplying vital oxygen and nutrients. The heart does not have a battery in it nor is it connected to a power outlet to make it function. It works every second of our life without any break or pause.



The liver is the largest gland the body has and is responsible for more than 500 different bodily functions. The liver is in charge of storing iron and vitamins, converting sugar storages into sugar that can be used to replenish blood sugar levels when they get low, make bile which is used to pull apart and digest fats, destroy old red blood cells and so much more. One organ, created by our creator to execute 500 functions.

Once a physician attached to the court of the tyrant al-Mansur asked the Imam Jafar as-Sadiq (as) if he wanted to learn something from him about the human body



The Imam replied: 'What I have is better than what you have.'

Then began an interesting discussion in which the Imam asked the physician questions;

- *Why is the head covered with hair?*
- *Why are the hair and the nails without life (sensation)?*
- *Why are there lines and wrinkles on the forehead?*

- *Why are the eyes shaped like almonds?*



- *Why has the nose been placed between the eyes?*

- *Why do the knees fold backwards, and why is the foot hollow on one side?*

To all these questions, the physician had only one reply: 'I do not know.'

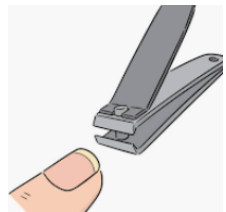


The Imam then went on to answer all the questions he asked, showing the wisdom and power of the Creator.

The hair is created over the head so that oil may reach inside, and heat may go out through it, and so that it may protect the head from heat and cold.

There are lines and wrinkles on the forehead so that sweat from the head is channeled away from reaching the eyes, giving the person a chance to wipe it away.

The eyes are almond-shaped so as to make it easy to put medicine inside them and remove dirt from them. Had they been square or round, both would have been difficult to perform.



The nose is put between the eyes as it helps to divide the light equally towards both eyes.

The hair and nails lack sensation to make it easier to cut and trim them. If there were life in them it would have hurt a person to cut them.

The knees fold backwards because human beings walk forward and the foot is hollow to make movement easier.'

Let us ponder over the above and appreciate the precision and mastery of how our creator has designed us. Then ask yourself should we really be worthy of mention?

Lessons learnt from this verse

Man was nothing before Allah (swt) created him.

Should we not thank Allah (swt) for creating us and making us worthy of mention?

Allah (swt) is the one who brought us from the stage of not being worthy of mention to the stage of "the best of creations."

Not only did Allah (swt) create man, but equipped his body with organs that perform amazing work.

Imam Sadiq's (as) discussion with a physician on the role of some parts of the body, gives us an insight into the intricate and perfect design from our creator.

Allah (swt) has designed our body parts in the most amazing ways. If we ponder over the workings of a human body, we will realize that our bodies and organs are all miracles.

The knowledge that our creator has been bestowed on the prophets and Imams that Allah (swt) has sent to guide us

Anybody who does not believe in creator should seriously rethink his/her thinking. All these body parts and their precise and wonderful work did not come up randomly. Someone designed it. Our creator is the best of designers.

Chapter 4: Surah Insaan verse 2

إِنَّا خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ أَمْشَاجٍ نَبْتَلِيهِ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا
 basiran sami'an faja'alnahu nabtalihi amshajin nut'fatin min al-insana khalaqna inna
 and sight hearing so We made (for) him (that) We test him; mixture a sperm-drop from man [We] created Indeed We

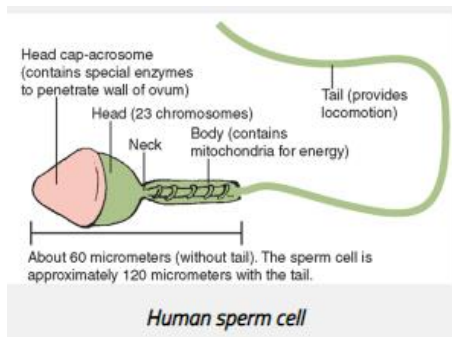
“Indeed we created man from a mixture of a sperm drop so that we can test him and we made him hearing and seeing

Let us discuss the first part of this verse;

إِنَّا خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ أَمْشَاجٍ
 amshajin nut'fatin min al-insana khalaqna inna
 mixture a sperm-drop from man [We] created Indeed We

Indeed we created man from a mixture of a sperm drop

نُطْفَةٍ *Nutfatin-* from *Nutfah* which means “little water”. A drop of fluid (sperm, semen)



In this verse, is the word **إِنْسَانَ** “man” speaking about Prophet Adam (as) or every human? The verse says, “Indeed we created man from a mixture of a sperm drop.” Prophet Adam (as) was not created this way; however, his children and all other humans were created this way. So, this verse is speaking about humans, the children of Prophet Adam (as) and not Prophet Adam himself.

أَمْشَاجٍ *Amshajan-* means a mixture, mingled, blended together

Nutfatin amshajan can hence be translated as a mixed fluid, but can have multiple meanings;

1. It means the sperm and the ovum which are mixed and they form the zygote which is the first cell of the child.
2. It means the different abilities that are mixed and combined in the zygote and the child inherits those talents through their parents, which is the DNA of the child. How tall the child will be, size of the nose, ears, shape of the face etc.

POINTS TO PONDER It is amazing, when we ponder, how from one drop of fluid hands, feet, mouth, eyes, organs etc. come about and even if all the body parts are formed, there is no life in the body until Allah^(swt) puts life into it. That is truly magnificent. Surely, we are absolutely dependent on Allah ^(swt) and he is the one who gives life to all of us.

Let us ask the atheists to answer who produces the bones and flesh in the womb? Who can bring life to this body? Who created this system that the whole body is created by one cell that is multiplied and every cell becomes exactly what it's supposed to become? The hands become hands the feet become feet. We surely have a creator and he is the best creator.

نَبْتَلِيهِ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا

basiran
and sight

sami'an
hearing

faja'alnahu
so We made (for) him

nabtalihi
(that) We test him;

...so that we can test him and we made him hearing and seeing

نَبْتَلِيهِ *Nabtalihi* from *Ibtila'* (that) We test him;

سَمِيعًا *sami'an* means hearing



بَصِيرًا *Basiran* means sight



Allama Tabatabai in Tafsir Al mizan has said **Ibtida'** means "transforming and modifying something, from one state to another." This word is used when gold is melted and transformed into ornaments like jewelry. Man is blessed with hearing and sight so that he can hear and see the message of truth which Allah (swt) has sent through messengers and scriptures. Using these faculties, man is expected to follow the way of truth and to journey the path of life with faith and righteous deeds. Allah (swt) not only created man, but also directs and guides him as he journeys through life. Allah (swt) uses tests and trials, to transform man into a beautiful spiritual being just as gold is transformed into ornaments of beauty. Hence a test is not always a punishment or a curse, but an agent of transformation.

An example would be a surgeon, who has to study, take practical exams so that he perfects his skill. The written and practical tests, the surgeon has to go through is not to punish him, but to help him to perfect his skills, so he can become a good and proficient surgeon.

According to Ayatullah Makarim Shirazi, the sentence **Nabtalahi** speaks about the tests Allah (swt) gives to the people. Allah (swt) has blessed man with the ability to receive duties. People have the honor to be commanded by Allah (swt). This is surely a great blessing.

For example, in a company, the boss delegates the most important tasks to the one whom he trusts and knows that he is capable of carrying out the duties. Other employees envy the one who receives the most orders and tasks. They envy him because they know that he has the boss's trust and confidence. The person has the ability to fulfill that order and accomplish the goal. Likewise, from the whole creation, Allah (swt) chose the man to have the honor to be his servant. He gave man the ability to receive his orders and also the potential to fulfill them successfully.

Being the servant of Allah (swt) is truly an honor. Imam Ali (as) says;
It is enough an honor for me that you are my Lord and it is enough honor for me that I am your servant.

POINTS TO PONDER What a status Allah (swt) has given us. We should ponder and realize the depth of this honorable status!

Allama Tabatabai simplifies the explanation of this verse in al Mizan, where he says "We have indeed created the human from a drop of a fluid that is a mixture of various constituents, while we transform them through several stages, from one state to another. Then We made them hearing and seeing, so that they may hear the divine message that is conveyed to them, and may see the divine signs that prove God's oneness, prophethood, and the hereafter."

If we see squirrels running across a road, barely missing getting run over by cars, do we jump out of our car and yell at them that they are doing something wrong? Not at all! But if we see people doing the same thing we question their state of mind. We stop and tell them of the foolishness of what they're doing.

*Why do we act differently in these situations? Because humans have what squirrels and other animals do not- **intellect**.*



Allah (swt) gave humans this great gift. So we should humans not be grateful to Allah (swt) for this great blessing?

Why does Allah (swt) only mention hearing and eyesight in this verse? The reason is that these two blessings are vital for a person's spiritual purification. One can listen to the Quran, hear a scholar talk, One can also see the words of the holy book, read books of knowledge. All these have a direct effect on the person's well-being as using these two blessings to see and hear good purify the spiritual heart.



In this following anecdote, there was a young man who was in a dilemma. His school teacher was always stressing that there was no such thing as a God, while, his parents always taught him to believe and worship in a creator. The young man was confused. He did not know who to believe. Was he to believe his teacher who told him there was no such thing as a God, or was he to believe his parents that there is a creator.



Once, the young man accompanied his mother to a doctor's appointment. While sitting in the visitor's room, the young man was drawn to a fish tank aquarium that was placed there. The young man moved closer to observe the fishes and was amazed at the sight of the colorful fishes. and how beautifully they were designed. The colors all matched and blended perfectly with each other. He realized then, that somebody must have designed these fishes, with their delicate organs, chosen these various colors on them. He noted how well the colors

blended and matched, just like a painter would. These few minutes of pondering over the amazing creation of just one of the many creations helped this man realize that there has to be a creator.

What this young man did was simply use his eyesight coupled with intellect. He reasoned and came up with a logical conclusion based on what he saw and observed. He used the blessing of sight that Allah (swt) gave him to reason with himself using his intellect.

Another example, this time using the faculty of hearing is the story of Fudayl Ib Ayad. Fudayl was a thief and a bandit. One night, Fudayl climbed a wall to observe the movement of a passing caravan he was planning to raid. Just then, he heard someone reciting the Quran. His attention drew to the recitation. When Fudayl heard verse 16 of chapter of Al-Hadid, he was captivated. This verse had such an effect on him that he experienced a change of heart and abandoned his evil ways. He repented sincerely for his actions and even went around begging forgiveness from his victims and returning back the items he had stolen from them. What did this verse say?

Has the time not come for those who have believed that their hearts should become humbly submissive at the remembrance of Allah and what has come down of the truth? And let them not be like those who were given

the Scripture before, and a long period passed over them, so their hearts hardened; and many of them are defiantly disobedient.

Lessons learnt from this verse

Allah (swt) tests us. This world is a place of tests. He has given us hearing and eyesight to see how and what we use them to feed our soul with. Do we feed the soul with sinful sounds and sinful images or do we use these faculties to advance in knowledge and do good deeds that benefit humanity and the world we live in?

There are many signs that Allah (swt) has placed within his various creations that should stir our intellect and make us more knowledgeable and more spiritual.

Everything points to the creator. Allah (swt) has placed signs for us to guide us towards him

Even hardened criminals' hearts change when they listen and ponder over the Quran

Chapter 76: Surah Insaan verse 3

إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا
inna hadaynahu al-sabila imma shakiran wa-imma kafuran
Indeed We guided him (to) the way whether (he) be grateful and whether (he) be ungrateful

Indeed we have guided him to the Way: whether he be grateful or ungrateful (it is up to him).

هَدَيْنَاهُ *Hadaynahu* from the word *Hidaya* means we have guided him

The words **إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ** “Indeed we have guided him to the way,” are saying that Allah (swt) has shown the people the right path and he has provided the necessary tools to guide them.

السَّبِيلَ *AL-Sabil*. Means the way or path, is speaking about the path or way that every person should follow. This is the path that leads a person to the success of salvation in this world and the hereafter and brings them close to Allah (swt).

Alamah Tabaitabai say that *hidayah* (guidance) in this verse is “showing the way to someone,” while not taking them to the destination. *Sabil* is meant in its literal sense, which is “a way that leads to the desired goal,” which would be the path of truth.

How does Allah (swt) guide?

1. An inbuilt guidance system that is placed in the nature of every person. Every person knows what the right path is in their hearts. Every person also knows what is good and what is bad. This is called the **Fitrah**. The below verse is related to the **Fitrah**

And the soul and Him Who made it perfect, then He inspired it to understand what is right and wrong for it; (Quran 91:7-8)

Every person is born with the recognition of good or bad, right or wrong. For example, when we lie or steal, we are automatically engulfed in a feeling of guilt. This is the **Fitrah** that kicks in and stops us from doing bad. Allah (swt) in his mercy has placed this alarm system in every human that alerts him and stops him from going any further on the wrong path. It is like a GPS system that we use to find our way. This inner GPS system sends alarm signals to us when we

are attempting or thinking of disobeying our lord. This system guides us to the right path that leads us to Allah (swt).

However, we have to be careful as this fitrah can get covered with our sins and stubborn behavior, which eventually leads it to become muted.

For example, if we have a lamp illuminating a room and we place a thin cloth over it, the light's power of brightness will diminish slightly. If we continue to place multiple layers of the same type of cloth over the lamp, the brightness will keep on fading until a time comes when the light from the lamp will not be seen and the lamp will no longer illuminate the room. This is similar to what happens when man commits sins. Multiple and continuous sinning diminishes the power of the fitrah and ultimately the person will not be able to hear the voice of the fitrah calling him towards good and forbidding him from evil.



2) The second guidance that Allah (swt) has blessed us is external which has been brought to us by the prophets and the divine books that have been revealed.

The divine scriptures were sent down as guidance;

And before this was the Scripture of Musa (Moses) as a guide and a mercy. And this is a confirming Book (the Quran) in the Arabic language, to warn those who do wrong, and as glad tidings to the good-doers (Quran46:12)

The Quran is a book of guidance.

This is the (True) Book wherein is no doubt, a guidance to the pious ones, (Quran 2: 2)

"Indeed this Qur'an guides to the path which is clearer and straighter than any other." (Quran17:9)

The prophets and imams are another form of guidance. They teach the commands of the lord and guide as per his command;

In Islam, Allah (swt) sent the holy prophet Muhammad (saw) and his family which comprised of 12 imams, who succeeded each other and guided their respective generations towards the right path

"We have appointed them Imams in order that they might guide in accordance with our command" (21:73),

Our souls and our innate nature are thirsty for the truth that is brought by the prophets, and that is why a person with a pure heart easily accepts the truth.

The difference between the two forms of guidance, explained above is that the Fitrah is universal, given to all humans without exception. It is up to the individual to either maintain this Fitrah and strengthen it or alternatively ignore it, which will eventually weaken it's power just like the lamp with the pieces of cloth over it.

There is story of a person who got in a taxi. The driver was Muslim. They got into a conversation into religion. The taxi driver gifted his customer with the Quran. This person, not really interested, reluctantly accepted the Quran and took it home, where he left it on a table and went to sleep.

A few hours later, the man's friend, who shared the apartment walked in and just as he was walking to his room, noticed the Quran. He picked it up and read the first page. The man ended up reading the Quran throughout the whole night. This was the beginning of the journey for this man as he eventually accepted Islam.

The external guidance is available to whoever seeks it, using the knowledge gained and to strengthen one's faith.

إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا

kafuran wa-imma shakiran imma
(he) be ungrateful and whether (he) be grateful whether

whether he be grateful or ungrateful

This part of this verse has a very important message in it. It proves the freewill of humans. It says that Allah (swt) has shown us the way. However, it is up to us to follow the way he has shown. We are not forced to accept the truth. He has given us freewill, so it is up to us to be grateful and accept the truth or be ungrateful by rejecting the truth.

Thanking Allah (swt) itself is true wisdom. A person with wisdom will always be thankful to Allah, because he knows that everything he has is a blessing from his lord. True wisdom is when one uses the blessings properly and not misuse them. For example, he uses his eyes by looking and admiring all the halal things and does not use his eyes by looking at haram things. The best way to be thankful to Allah is by using the blessings appropriately.

No one can thank Allah (swt) the way He deserves to-Not even coming close. We cannot thank Him enough with either our tongue or our actions or both combined, because every time we thank Allah (swt) he deserves another thanks for giving us the strength and the guidance to thank Him. So, since no one has the power to thank Allah (swt).

*the word شَاكِرٍ **Shakir** "grateful" is used in this verse.*

*On the other hand, someone who denies the truth after Allah guides them in so many ways is surely **very ungrateful**. That is why the word كَفُورٍ **kafur** "very ungrateful" is used in this verse.*

FREE WILL

There are some people who oppose the view of free will. For example after the tragedy of Karbala, when Prophet Muhammad's (saw) grandson Imam Hussain (as) and 72 of his friends and family were mercilessly killed in the land of Karbala. Iraq, The ladies including Lady Zainab (as) the sister of Imam Hussain (as) were taken as captives on the orders of Yazid through his governor Ibne Ziyad. When Lady Zainab (as) was brought to his court, the evil governor taunted her saying "Did you not see what Allah (swt) did with your brother?"

What this evil man was saying that what happened in Karbala was the wish of Allah (swt). Ibne Ziyad was promoting the belief that humans don't have freewill and whatever they do is the wish of Allah (swt). He was saying that the ones who killed Imam Husain (as) were forced to

do that because it was the will of Allah (swt). Some of the tyrants promote this thought, so that they are not blamed for the sins they commit and the oppression that they cause. It was as if they are saying, "It is Allah's wish that we rule and oppress. And it is also his wish that you tolerate the oppression."

However, lady Zainab (sa) gave a beautiful answer, "I saw nothing but beauty," she said. This sentence has no complaint or regret. In fact it even sounds like gratitude. It sounds like she is thanking Allah (swt).

These are the words of a lady who lost all her dear ones in half a day. She saw them being killed in the most painful way. She saw all the calamities they suffered. She saw their thirst and the wounds that were inflicted on them. She went through the tough responsibility of taking care of their dear ones after their martyrdom, when she defended them from the looting attacks of the tyrants.

After all this, when she hears the taunts of an oppressor she replies saying, "I saw nothing but beauty." It was beauty for her because she saw the big sacrifice that the servants of Allah (swt) gave to save the religion that his grandfather Prophet Muhammad (saw) worked so hard to establish. It was beauty because she could see all the love that they had for their creator. She saw the love they had for being martyred for his sake and proceed towards meeting Him. Surely this is a very beautiful statement.

Here are a few questions for the ones who have this belief of no free will

- 1. If we are doing all of our actions forcibly and it is only Allah's (swt) will, then why did Allah (swt) promise rewards for good deeds and punishment for bad deeds? Rewards are not forthcoming for forced actions.*
- 2. If we are forced in our actions why did Allah (swt) create paradise and hellfire? Is it justice that I am rewarded for the good deeds I have done without my will and another person is punished for the bad deeds he has done without his will?*
- 3. If everything we do is Allah's (swt) will, then why did Allah (swt) create this world? It is more like a puppet show then. It is like the people are puppets that are acting upon the will of someone other than themselves.*
- 4. If everything we do is Allah's (swt) will what will happen to the purpose of creation, reaching perfection and seeking closeness to Allah (swt)?*

We can hence reason that the only logical explanation is that Allah (swt) has blessed us with freewill. We are able to choose the path we want to take ourselves. Do we choose salvation or

do we choose remorse and shame on the Day of resurrection? Do we choose to be grateful to Allah (swt) for guiding us to the right path or do we choose to be ungrateful and reject his guidance?

Thankfulness to the lord is one of the highest virtues which a man could aspire for. However it is easy to be thankful when one has an easy life, a prospering business, a respectful job and a happy family. It is a different story when things are not going as desired. Most of us, in such situations, remain obsessed with sorrow, forgetting the countless bounties of God which we are bestowed with at that time.

“And few amongst my servants are grateful” (Quran 34:13)

Our Holy Prophet, Muhammad (saw) had to contend with many problems. He had to face abuses from his community and the fury of the powerful tribal chiefs. Children used to throw stones on him, women scattered thorny bushes in his path. But in spite of all this and more, our prophet remained cheerful and thankful to God.

When a man asked him why did he pray whole nights and fasted almost continuously, when he had so much work to do every day, the Prophet simply asked: “should I not be a thankful servant to Allah?”

Therefore remember Me, I will remember you, and be thankful to Me, and do not be ungrateful to Me (Quran2:152)

Lessons learnt from this verse

Allah (swt) not only created us and brought us in this world, he has not forsaken us. He has also shown us the way to success in this world and the hereafter.

It is up to us to freely take up the offer from the creator, to get the “roadmap” to success by accessing his various forms of guidance via divine books, prophets and appointed leaders.

We have a choice to either show our gratitude or show or intense ingratitude in rejecting the divine guidance.

We should be thankful to our creator by seeing the blessings he continues to shower upon us.

Chapter 5: Surah Insaan verse 4

إِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ سَلَاسِلًا وَأَغْلَالًا وَسَعِيرًا

wasat'iran	wa-aghlan	salasila	lil'kafirina	a'tadna	inna
and a Blazing Fire	and shackles	chains	for the disbelievers	[We] have prepared	Indeed We

Indeed we have prepared for the faithless chains, iron collars, and a blazing fire.

أَعْتَدْنَا *Atadna* means we have prepared or arranged

سَلَاسِلٍ *Salasila* means chains or ropes by which a criminal is bound and dragged with

أَغْلَالٍ *Aghlalan* means shackles or iron collars that tie the hands to the neck

سَعِيرًا *Sa'iran* means blazing and flaming fire

This verse is speaking about the punishment the ungrateful ones will face on the Day of Judgment. They will be punished with chains which they will be tied by, iron collars which will tie their hands and feet to their necks, and a blazing fire. May Allah (swt) save all of us from this terrifying punishment!

*This verse uses the verb **أَعْتَدْنَا** *Atadna* which means "We have prepared." This verb is in the past tense. Even though this punishment is in the future and the faithless will receive it after their death why is the verse not saying we will prepare? This is because Allah (swt) is emphasizing that their punishment has already been prepared for them.*

Sometimes some people take the promise of Allah (swt) about the punishment lightly. They say, "Allah (swt) is very merciful. How could he punish us?" Or sometimes if they are doing a sinful act they say, "Allah (swt) is the most merciful, and he will surely forgive us." These people easily think that they won't be punished.

Imam Ali (as) said, "No one should think that a person is safe from the punishment of Allah (swt), even if that person is the best of the nation."

Do the people of the towns feel secure from our punishment overtaking them at midday while they are playing around?

Do they feel secure from Allah's devising? No one feels secure from Allah's devising except the people who are losers. (Quran7:98-99)

POINTS TO PONDER These powerful verses need to be pondered upon.

When a person feels that Allah (swt) won't punish them they easily fall into sin as they become relaxed. They easily backbite because they do not realize that backbiting destroys people's lives and reputation. They kill the innocent, oppress the weak, steal and create mayhem without any fear or apprehension. They think they will not be held accountable. They are wrong! It is said that on the day of Judgment, a backbiter will be known by a foul smell on his breath How embarrassing will that be! That alone, should be a deterrent not to backbite.

Or some people easily say, "It's okay if I don't wear hijab. Allah knows that I don't have any bad intentions." If they knew the aftereffects of not wearing hijab or the punishment they would not say that.

So, the ones who think of themselves as safe from Allah's (swt) punishment, surely are the losers because they can easily sin without any fear of punishment. It is true that Allah (swt) is surely the most merciful. But he is the most just too. Would it be fair if Allah (swt) forgives all of the sinners? Then what about the people who worked hard their whole life to stay on the straight path and staying away from sins?

On the other hand, Allah (swt) is the most forgiving and the most merciful. Surely he forgives the sinners who stop their evil ways and come back to him. They are his creation and He loves them. The key here is realizing one's errors and then return back to the all merciful with both fear and hope, not losing hope in Allah's (swt) mercy nor feel free from Allah's (swt) punishment.

Some people ask why is there so much threatening in the Holy Quran? Why don't we talk about rewards instead of punishment? Why don't we talk about paradise instead of hellfire?

Answer: *Usually wherever the holy Quran speaks about the punishment of Allah (swt), it speaks about the rewards of Allah (swt) before or after the verse. This verse speaks about the punishment and the next verses speak about the rewards.*

Humans need a motive to perform or refrain from an action. A punishment is a stronger deterrent from performing evil actions. A good example is the driving rules we have to follow in our everyday life. In the rules of driving, there are a lot of fears. If one crosses a red light or if caught speeding, he or she will fear the punishment of being fined or penalized. In other words,

one of the reasons why we have discipline on the streets is because of these strict rules. Sometimes in some countries we even see the government making the penalty higher so that people drive properly due to the fear of incurring these high penalties.

However, within laws of driving, people are not guaranteed rewards. They are usually threatened with punishments. That's the motive that is used. But Allah (swt) is the most merciful. He motivates the people with rewards and punishments. It is necessary to mention the punishments or else some people refuse to listen to the truth and they run away from what truly benefits them. Hence the punishments stated in the Quran should be taken as a deterrent in that every evil action has consequences.

All the blessings we have are provided to us by Allah (swt). He has given countless blessings. We should try counting the blessings we have been blessed with. The more we count, the more we will remember and the more we will appreciate our lord and the more will be our incentive not to be ungrateful to him.

And surely the biggest appreciation that we can show Allah for these blessings is staying away from what He has prevented us from. We should try to use the blessings He has given us in what pleases Him and not in what he dislikes.

Allah (swt) has given us so many blessings. There are so many things that are halal. Why are some people only tempted to the haraam acts? When one is tempted to do something haraam, one of the good ways that they can prevent themselves from that sin is substituting something halaal in its place.

For example, if someone is tempted to listen to haraam music they can substitute halaal music in its place. Allah (swt) has created us and he is all wise. He has created a solution for all of our needs and surely he has not made any of the solutions to our needs haraam.

Lessons learnt from this verse

The punishments that Allah (swt) has promised for those that disobey his commands should be taken seriously and serve as a warning that free will is not a license to do evil.

It is better to be on the straight path than being on the path of evil, as the punishments promised for the evil is no picnic.

Chapter 6: Surah Insaan verse 5

إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ يَشْرَبُونَ مِنْ كَأْسٍ كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا كَافُورًا

kafuran	mizajuha	kana	kasin	min	yashrabuna	al-abrara	inna
(of) Kafur	its mixture	is	a cup	from	will drink	the righteous	Indeed

Indeed the righteous will drink from a cup seasoned with Kafur,

The previous verse spoke about the punishment of the faithless. This verse and the next verses speak about the rewards of the pious.

الْأَبْرَارَ *Abrar* is the plural of **بَرٍّ** *Barr*. Barr means broad or expansive. Expansive Land and deserts are called barr because of they are vast. From this Abrar is applied to the righteous as their good deeds have an widespread effect on society. Abrar is also someone who does good deeds without desiring any gain from it, whether it be a reward, appreciation or recognition. It should be noted that for a good deed to have any benefit, it has to be accompanied by faith in Allah (swt).

They never have had faith. So Allah has made their works fail (Quran 33:19')

كَأْسٍ *Kasin* means a cup containing some drink

مِزَاجُهَا *mizajuha* from mizaj which means mixture

The word **كَافُورٍ** *Kafur* means a very good and pleasant smell. It also means a tree which smells very good. So, this verse is saying that the pure drink that the righteous will enjoy in heaven will taste good and smell good also.

When we smell good food we are pulled towards it. The smell of food is very important for it is the smell that attracts one to it. This pure drink of heaven will have a wonderful smell, the smell of Kafur, which is one of the best smells and is known to bring coolness.

Question: Who are the **الْأَبْرَارَ**, the righteous?

Answer: The Righteous (abrar) believe in God, his messenger and the last day. They consider themselves to be servants of their lord, their creator and the one guides and directs them.

from the Quran we see from sura Al Baqarah that; Righteousness is not to turn your faces to the east or the west; rather, righteousness is [personified by] those who have faith in Allah and the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets, and who give their wealth, for the love of Him, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler and the beggar, and for [the freeing of] the slaves, and maintain the prayer and give the zakat, and those who fulfill their covenants, when they pledge themselves, and those who are patient in stress and distress, and in the heat of battle. They are the ones who are true, and it is they who are the God wary. (Quran 2: 177)

This verse provides us with information on the qualities of the righteous;

The righteous have complete faith in Allah (swt),

The righteous believe in the hereafter, the angels, the divine books and the prophets.

The righteous have a very strong faith and when calamities fall on them, they remain unshaken and remain firm in their beliefs. They always hold on to the right path.

When the righteous say they have faith with their tongue, they mean it. You can see it in their actions and you can be sure that it is in their heart too.

The righteous are not attached to wealth. They realize that wealth is a blessing from Allah (swt) and they are ready to give it to whoever needs it, whether it be to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler and the beggar, and for [the freeing of] the slaves. All just for the love of Allah (swt)

The righteous maintain their prayer and give charity. It does not matter how busy they are. Prayers are their first priority. It does not matter how tired they are they still wake up for their morning prayer. They keep the connection with their creator.

However, there are some people who decide to skip the Morning Prayer, but easily wake up early in the morning if they have to go to work, watch a match or if they have to study for an exam or even go out with friends. So what excuse do they have for not getting up for the morning prayers? If I easily miss my morning prayers it might be because I do not consider the prayers as important. If I can wake up for worldly pleasures, i can also wake up for my prayers if they are important for me. I can wake up early to please my boss, but do not care to please my master.

- 1. They fulfill their covenants when they pledge themselves, means they fulfill their promises. This is very important. It does not matter who we promise to. Even if a*

promise is made to a little child, it should be kept. Children follow our actions. We could be teaching them to be dishonest by breaking our promises.

2. *They are patient in stress and distress. Some people easily lose their faith when a calamity befalls upon them. They start complaining to Allah (swt). "Oh Allah! Why me?! Why did this calamity have to befall on me?!" But, we should remember that calamities are actually blessings. They wash away our sins and elevate a believer.*

Finally the end of the verse says, "They are the ones who are true, and it is they who are the God wary."

Lessons learnt from this verse

We should strive to be a righteous individual. It is not only the right thing to do, but will give us enormous satisfaction. The rewards are immeasurable.

We toil day and night just to get decent living conditions or to attain material wealth that will last a few months or years. So why should we not do good actions in the name of our lord? He will in return bless us with infinite rewards in this world and the hereafter

Chapter 7: Surah Insaan verse 6

عَيْنًا يَشْرَبُ بِهَا عِبَادُ اللَّهِ يُفَجِّرُونَهَا تَفْجِيرًا

tafjiran	yufajjirunaha	al-lahi	ibadu	biha	yashrabu	aynan
abundantly	causing it to gush forth	(of) Allah	(the) slaves	from it	will drink	A spring

A spring where the servants of Allah drink, which they make to gush forth as they please.

عَيْنًا *Aynan* means a spring or fountain

يُفَجِّرُونَهَا *Yufajjirunaha* comes from the word **فجر** *Fajr* which means to split or gush out, That is why “dawn” is called **فجر** *Fajr* because it is when light splits and tears the curtain of darkness and the light gushes out. Also a wicked evil doer is called **فاجر** (*Faajir*) because they split and tear the curtain of shame and purity when they commit evil and disobey their creator. So, this verse is saying that the servants of Allah (swt), the righteous will split the ground wherever they please in paradise and enjoy the aromatic stream that will gush forth from it.

This spring will be the first blessing the righteous will receive after being welcomed to paradise. This drink will wash away any grief and sorrow that they had. Whenever we visit a resort or even a friend's house, the first thing a host offers us is a drink, Allah (swt) is the best of hosts. He will offer us the best of drinks to welcome us in the best of places

“This spring is in the house of the Prophet of Islam (saw) and from there it will flow to the houses of the other prophets and the believers.” Imam Baqir (as)

The Holy Prophet (saw) and the AhlulBayt are the source of all of the blessings that we are granted. Knowledge and the truth flows from the house of the Holy Prophet (saw) and the AhlulBait (as). And in the hereafter this blessed spring will flow from the Holy Prophet's house and its branches will reach the houses of all the believers.

Lessons learnt from this verse

The first blessing to be received in paradise will be in the form of a pleasant drink

Chapter 8: Surah Insaan verse 7

يُوفُونَ بِالنَّذْرِ وَيَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا كَانَ شَرُّهُ مُسْتَطِيرًا

mus'tatiran
widespread

sharruhu
its evil

kana
(which) is

yawman
a Day

wayakhafuna
and fear

bil-nadhri
the vows

yufuna
They fulfill

They fulfill their vows and fear a day whose evil will be widespread.

يُوفُونَ -Yufuna means they fulfill. This word is in present tense

يَخَافُونَ -yakhafuna means fear. This word is also in the present tense.

بِالنَّذْرِ Bil Nadr means a vow. A promise to do something if a prayer or supplication is fulfilled

مُسْتَطِيرًا Mustatiran .To fully spread in all directions. Just like a fire which fully spreads out in all directions

These verses speak about the qualities of the **الْأَبْرَارَ** (Abrar), those who will enjoy the aromatic drink and all the other blessings that will be mentioned in this surah. May Allah (swt), make us from them inshaAllah.

Once The holy Prophet's (saw) grandsons Imam Hasan (as) and Imam Husayn (as) fell ill. The Holy Prophet (saw) came to see them with some of his companions. He suggested to Imam Ali (as) that he should take a spiritual vow for the children's recovery. So Imam Ali (as) and Sayyida Fatima (saw) and Hadhrat Fidha (as) the maid of Sayyida Fatima (as) prayed to Allah for the recovery of Hasan and Husain (as) and took a vow to fast for three days for the children to get well., Imam Hasan (as) and Imam Husain (as) and their maid servant Fizza also took part in this vow.

The children did recover from the illness soon after and everyone fulfilled their vow and they fasted. When they were going to break their fast, someone knocked at the door saying: "O people of the house of the Prophet, I am a poor man. Please give me some food. Imam Ali (as) and Sayyida Fatima (as), immediately got up and offered their share of the meal. Their sons Imams Hasan(as) and Husain (as) and Fizza also gave their share of the bread to the poor man and broke their fast with water.

The next day, they fasted again. As they were ready to break their fast, once again, a voice called out from the door: "O people of the house of The Prophet, I am an orphan and I am

hungry. Could you feed me?" So again they all gave their food away to the orphan and they broke their fast with water.

The third day, a prisoner came at the time when the family was preparing to eat, asking for some food. Again, the family of the Holy Prophet gave away their food and broke their fast with water.

The next day the signs of hunger could be seen on the faces of the family of the Prophet (saw). When the Holy Prophet (saw) saw them, he said, "It is hard for me to see you in this state." At this time the angel Jibrael (as) descended and said, "Oh Muhammad! Receive this surah. Allah (swt) congratulates you for having a family like this." Then he recited Surah Insaan. The 5th verse to the 22nd verse was revealed at this moment.

Surely, the dear family of the Prophet (saw) is the true example for these verses. These verses were revealed in their praise. And they are our role models inshaAllah.

Now let's look at some of the qualities of the AhlulBayt and the righteous that are mentioned in this surah. Let's start with a question.

Question: The verbs "fulfill" and "fear" are in present tense. The verse does not say "fulfilled" or "feared," rather present tense is used. What can we learn from this?

Answer: This shows the continuity of their actions. They do not act in one way one day and change their ways the next. They do not only fulfill their vows once or twice or in this incident but they always fulfill their vows. It does not matter if the task is easy or a difficult one. They surely fulfill it.

They always make sure that they make a promise for what they can do. If it is something that they cannot do they do not commit. And when they do commit, a person can be sure that they will surely fulfill their promise.

And they always fear the Day of Judgment. It does not matter if it is the month of Ramadhan, Muharram, or another month, they don't forget the Day of Judgment. It does not matter where they are or what situation they are in, they do not forget Allah (swt).

Some people are only religious in the month of Ramadhan and Muharram. They change into another person in these months. For example they stop listening to haram music, recite Quran and do all sorts of good deeds. These people should try to continue to implement this wonderful change throughout the year. If they can change into another person for two whole months, they can surely continue to be like that throughout the year too. If they can gather the power to prevent themselves from haram music for two whole months they can surely do that for the rest

of the year too. After all, Allah (swt) is the creator of all the months and he is always watching us.

However, some people only follow the Islamic rules inside the mosque. Outside the Mosque, they are a different person. Surely, Allah (swt) is present everywhere. How can we disobey Allah (swt) in his presence? Let us be the same person we are in the mosque and everywhere else inshaAllah.

Lessons learnt from this verse

The day of judgment is real and is coming. We best get prepared for it!

We should follow the example of the Ahlulbayt and do some good actions while we still have the chance.

We should strive to change for the better not during the holy months, but forever.

Chapter 9: Surah Insaan verse 8

وَيُطْعَمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا
wa-asiran wayatiman mis'kinan hubbihi ala al-ta'ama wayut'imuna
and (the) captive and (the) orphan (to the) needy love (for) it in spite of the food And they feed

They give food, even though they like it (and need it), to the needy, the orphan and the prisoner,

This verse speaks about another quality of the **الْأَبْرَارَ** (Abrar), the righteous, and **عِبَادُ اللَّهِ** (AbdAllah) the servants of Allah. It says that the righteous give in the way of Allah (swt) even if they need what they are giving away. They sacrifice for others in the way of Allah (swt).

Also, they give to everyone. It's not like they only help the orphans. No, they help the poor and the prisoners too. They serve everyone.

وَيُطْعَمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ

They give food, even though they like it (and need it),

The pronoun **هـ** "it" in the word **حُبِّهِ** is pointing to the food that the righteous gave away. So it says, "They give food, even though they like **it** (and need **it**)."

An important point that we learn from the family of the prophet is that they gave away their food, even though they needed it. They did not give the food which they dislike and do not eat; rather they give their own dinner to others.

Lady Fatimah (as) gave away her new wedding dress to a poor lady on the day of her wedding. She gave what she liked the most. She did not give a garment which she used to wear or did not need rather she gave the best dress she had. This is how the prophet's family used to give in the way of Allah (swt).

Imam Ali (as) went to the market with his servant, Qambar. There he bought 2 shirts, one which was really nice and expensive and the other which was not as nice. When Imam Ali (as) returned home he gave the better shirt to Qambar and kept the other one for himself. Qambar told the Imam (as) that it would look better if he wore the nicer shirt as he was the leader of the Muslims while Qambar himself was only a mere servant. Imam Ali (as) answered that Qambar should wear the nicer shirt because he was younger and so it would suit him better,

Sometimes when we want to give something in the way of Allah (swt) we look for the clothes we have worn the most, the ones that are not so nice, the ones that have a defect in them and we give them away "in the way of Allah (swt)" This is not in the way of Allah! This does not count. Why?

The answer is in Surah Ale Imran, verse 92

لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ ۚ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ

You will never attain righteousness until you spend out of what you hold dear, and whatever you may spend of anything, Allah indeed knows it.

This verse is saying that if I want to do a righteous act then I should give from what I like, not from what has no value to me. That is when my act will be truly a righteous one.

مَسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا

To the needy, the orphan and the prisoner,

The AhlulBayt and the righteous feed the needy, orphans and the prisoners. Their generosity is not limited to any circle. They give everyone.

In this verse what do we mean by **أَسِيرًا** (Aseer) "prisoner"? How can a prisoner come looking for food when he should be behind bars? This is because at the time of the Holy Prophet (saw) there were no prisons. The captives who were brought from the battlefield were divided amongst the Muslims and each family had the responsibility to take care of the captives given to them. The Holy Prophet (saw) instructed that they should take good care of the captives. However, sometimes if the family did not have enough food they would tell the captive to go and ask help from other Muslims to feed them.

These are the beautiful teachings of Islam.

Imam Ali (as) says, "Feeding the prisoner and being kind to him is an obligatory right (for him) even if he will be killed tomorrow."

Even if the prisoner is sentenced to death and will be killed tomorrow no one has any right to prevent him from food and water or mistreat him. This is what Islam teaches us.

It is narrated in history when the Muslims heard the Prophet's (saw) sayings about doing good to the prisoners sometimes they would give their own food to the prisoners and stay hungry.

Another point from this verse to ponder about:

After the AhlulBayt gave away their food to a captive on the third day of their fast, we can only imagine the hunger that they were facing at that moment. But they still gave away their food without hesitation. This is how the AhlulBayt would favor others more than themselves.

We should learn from the Ahlulbayt. We should try to help all those who are needy across the world. There are so many people in need. The Prophet (saw) and the Imams were even kind to the non-believers, not just the Muslims. Moreover the AhlulBayt helped others even when they were in need of what they were giving away. But a lot of us can give without getting into any hardship. So we should fulfill our duty and use the wealth that Allah (swt) has blessed us in the way He commands us to.

Islam has guided us in every aspect of our life. That is why we say that Islam is a religion to live with. It teaches us how to live. Islam is not only limited to mosque, prayers, fasting, etc. Islam is a lifestyle.

That is why we need to follow the rules of Islam in school, college, work, in the park, by the beach, everywhere, because Islam has provided us with a lifestyle and practical rules to follow.

Lessons learnt from this verse

The prophet's family (Ahlulbayt) were special people. They were sent as guides to humanity after the prophet.

They were prepared to go to any length to please Allah (swt)

We should learn more about the Ahlulbayt and follow them as that is what Allah (swt) intends for us to do

Chapter 10: Surah Insaan verse 9

إِنَّمَا نُنْطِغُمُكُمْ لَوَجْهِهِ اللَّهُ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكْرًا

 shukuran wala jazaan minkum nuridu la al-lahi liwajhi nut'imukum innama
 thanks and not any reward from you we desire Not (of) Allah for (the) Countenance we feed you Only

We feed you only for the sake of Allah. We do not want any reward from you nor any thanks.

لَوَجْهِهِ *Wajhi* (means face) is an aspect of something by which it faces and meets other things. This means Allah's (swt) universal mercy which supports the existence of all beings and events. Accordingly, doing something for Allah's (swt) face means seeking to benefit from his mercy and trying to please Him. This should be done through focusing on His mercy and pleasure alone, and not with any hope or desire for any reward from any other source.

نُرِيدُ *Nuridu* means to want or desire. *La Nuridu* in this verse means that the righteous are not looking for any reward or Thanks. They just want or desire to please Allah (swt). This intention is not only limited to when they give their food. They have the same intention in all their deeds. They do them sincerely for Allah (swt).

This is the intention of the **الْأَبْرَارِ** (Abrar) the righteous, when they give in the way of Allah (swt). They have no other intention except pleasing Allah (swt). This intention is not only limited to when they give their food. They have the same intention in all their deeds. They do them sincerely for Allah (swt).

جَزَاءً (*Jazaan*) is when a person pays back for the good or bad deed that another person did to them. They pay back with their tongue or actions. In this verse, this word tells us that the righteous did not want to be paid back for the sacrifice they made with any action.

شُكْرًا (*shukroora*) refers to when a person remembers the blessings that an individual gave them and thanks them in their heart or with their tongue or actions. In this verse, this word tells us that the righteous were not even expecting to be thanked verbally by the individual who they helped.

Look at the sincerity of the family of the prophet. They did not even expect to be thanked with words for the big sacrifice they made. Sometimes when we help others, we expect to be thanked by them.

For example if you go out of your way and do a favor to a friend and that person does not even say Thank you, will it offend you? If you are doing the favor and looking for a word of appreciation then it will offend. However, when a person does an action sincerely for Allah (swt), he only wants to be appreciated and thanked by the creator. It does not matter to him if he is thanked or not. The appreciation from the master is more than enough. However, it is important and good manners to thank someone who has helped you or done a favor to you

Imam Sajjad (as) says: On the Day of Judgment Allah (swt) will ask one of his servants, "Did you thank the person (who gave you)? That servant will say, "No my Lord, I thanked you." Allah (swt) will say, "Since you didn't thank him you haven't thanked me either."

A husband should appreciate his wife and thank her for looking after the house, cooking and cleaning etc. One should not just take it for granted. Similarly a wife should appreciate and thank her husband when he helps around the house or does things for her. Spouses

Sometimes, people give donations and expect praises and free advertisement from the recipients. Will Allah (swt) reward them? NO!, because they expect the reward from others not from Allah (swt). So, why should Allah (swt) reward them? These people have already received their reward in this world by being appreciated and rewarded by others. That is the reward they intended that is what they get.

The Holy Prophet (saw) said, "Whenever you do an action do it only for Allah (swt); because he only accepts the sincere actions of His servants."

Allah (swt) only accepts and rewards those actions that are done sincerely for His sake. And, if a person does something sincerely for Allah (swt) it does not matter to them if they are not appreciated. They know that Allah (swt) will appreciate them and that is all that matters.

It is the duty of the one that receives a blessing to thank the giver. And it is the duty of the giver not to expect any reward or thanks from the receiver and to do it sincerely for Allah (swt)

Lessons learnt from this verse

We should do work just for the sake of Allah (swt) and to please him. We should not do it for any fame, fortune or reward from others

We should thank others when they do things for us. That is the right thing to do.

Chapter 11: Surah Insaan verse 10

إِنَّا نَخَافُ مِنْ رَبَّنَا يَوْمًا عَبُوسًا قَتَطِيرًا

qamtariran
and distressful

abusan
harsh

yawman
a Day

rabbina
our Lord

min
from

nakhafu
fear

inna
Indeed we

Indeed we fear from our Lord a harsh and distressful day

The word **عَبُوسًا** means harsh, In this verse It means the harshness of the day of Judgement

In the previous verse we mentioned that the AhlulBayt worked sincerely for the pleasure of Allah (swt). They did it only for Allah (swt), not even for the love of paradise or the fear for hellfire. They did not want to be rewarded either. Their intention was sincere. But why does this verse say that they did this act because of the fear of the harsh and distressful day? Did they not do this act just for the Lord?

*The verse does not say that the AhlulBayt did the action for the fear of the harsh and distressful day. It says, "Indeed we fear from **our Lord** a day that is harsh and distressful." So this is not the fear of punishment rather they fear letting **the Lord, down** on that day.*

Imam Sadiq (as) says, "There are three groups of worshipers. One group worships Allah (swt) because of fear. This is the worship of the slaves. One group worships Allah (swt) to receive rewards. This is the worship of the businessmen. One group worships Allah (swt), because they love Him. This is the worship of the freemen. And this is the highest (best) worship."

*Slaves obey their master because of fear. They know that if they disobey them, they will be punished. So they do what they are commanded as they are **afraid of the punishment**. Some people worship Allah (swt) because they fear the punishment of disobeying Him. This is like the obedience of slaves.*

Businessmen do transactions. They trade part of their wealth for what will bring more benefit to them. Some people worship Allah (swt) like businessmen. They have a transaction with him. They obey Allah (swt) in exchange for the rewards he promised them.

But some people obey Allah (swt) simply because they love him. They love him because He gave them all the blessings they have. He created them and gives them existence every moment. They love Him because of his beautiful attributes; mercy, graciousness, kindness, etc. That is why they obey him. This is the worship of the freemen.

Children do things for their parents because they love them and appreciate the hard work they do for them. This is how the freemen worship Allah (swt). They do not worship him for the fear of hellfire or for the reward of paradise. They worship Him just because they love him. And this is how the AhlulBayt worship Allah (swt). They worship Him sincerely out of love not because of the punishment or reward.

Another example is a child loves his teacher a lot. But the child keeps on bullying his classmate. The teacher is forced to punish the child. This punishment will be very difficult for the child. Why? Is it because of the pain of the punishment? No! It is because who the child is being punished by. The child loves that teacher and it is very embarrassing for the child to be punished by that teacher. That is what makes the punishment frightful. The child feels ashamed that the teacher is angry with him and the child feels he has let the teacher down.

*On the other hand, if the teacher rewards this child, the child will be delighted. Why? Is it because of the reward received? No, it is because of the person **who gave the reward**. That is what makes that reward that much special for the child.*

Similarly, the righteous are not afraid of the punishment of hellfire because they fear the punishment. They are afraid of it because they do not want to be punished by their beloved Allah (swt). They love him too much to let him down. They are not eager for the rewards of paradise because of its beauty and splendor. They are eager for the reward because they are promised and awarded by Allah (swt), their beloved.

This is worshipping Allah (swt) sincerely out of love and gratitude. May Allah (swt) make us from those who worship him with sincerity.

Question: *Is it wrong to worship Allah (swt) because of fear of punishment or eagerness of the reward?*

Answer: *A person can worship Allah (swt) for reward or fear of punishment. They will still be rewarded.*

Allah (swt) knows his creation. Man needs a motivation to do any action. That motivation can be fear or eagerness.

We are careful of not breaking laws when we are driving, because we do not want to be fined or hauled off to a judge to be punished. We are afraid of the punishment. Asports player plays with all his strength and ability, because, he want to win and rewarded with fame and of course the trophy. Similarly, Allah (swt) motivates the people with rewards or punishments, paradise and hellfire. It is okay to worship Allah (swt) because of the fear of punishment and eagerness to the rewards.

However, a higher motivation is love. This is a very strong motivation. For example, a mother goes out of her way for her child. She does not want any reward from her child. And she does not fear any punishment from them. She strives for her children's success just because she loves them.

Lessons learnt from this verse

The day of Judgement is going to be a harsh and distressful day.

Some people fall in love with Allah (swt). These people have a very strong motive to worship their Lord. They obey Him and worship Him because they love Him. And for sure, nothing can stop a lover.

Chapter 12: Surah Insaan verse 11

فَوَقَّاهُمُ اللَّهُ شَرَّ ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمِ وَلَقَّاهُمْ نَضْرَةً وَسُرُورًا

wasururan
and happiness

nadratan
radiance

walaqqahum
and will cause them to meet

al-yawmi
Day

dhalika
(of) that

sharra
(from the) evil

al-lahu
Allah

fawaqahumu
But will protect them

So Allah saved them from the ills of that day, and give them freshness and joy.

فَوَقَّاهُمُ Fa-waqāhum, from wiqāyah means protection from harm

نَضْرَةً Nadrah is the freshness and joy that one feels when they are granted a lot of blessings. The radiant faces of the righteous on the Day of Resurrection will show the peace and happiness they have in their hearts.

لَقَّاهُمْ Laqahum which means 'they meet', It shows that Allah will meet the righteous with His Grace, and places them in the Light of His mercy.

سُرُورًا Surūr(happiness, joy) is the opposite of sorrow and grief.

In this world the righteous feared disobeying their Lord. They gave priority to obeying him. And in their eternal life, Allah (swt) will give them joy. He will receive them with His mercy and give them happiness.

How peaceful it is to be safe in the frowning and fateful day! What a blessing it is to have the mercy of Allah (swt) on the day which is filled with fright and tribulations.

Yes, the righteous do suffer in this world. Sometimes it is hard for them to practice their principles. Sometimes they are mocked at when they follow their religion. Sometimes they are even targeted and attacked physically and emotionally and even denied a job just because of their Hijab. But the temporary tribulations that they had to bear in this world will be paid back with blessings that will last forever!

May Allah make us all steadfast on the path of the AhlulBayt (as) inshaAllah.

Chapter 13: Surah Insaan verse 12

وَجَزَاهُمْ بِمَا صَبَرُوا جَنَّةً وَحَرِيرًا
wahariran jannatan sabarū bima wajazahum
and silk (with) a Garden they were patient because And will reward them

And he rewarded them for their patience with a garden and [garments of] silk,

In this verse Allah (swt) says that he is rewarding the righteous with a garden and garments of silk for their patience. Also, in the other verses of the Holy Quran it is mentioned that paradise will be rewarded to the patient ones.

سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِمَا صَبَرْتُمْ فَنِعْمَ عُقْبَى الدَّارِ

*"Peace be on you, for your patience." How excellent is the reward of the [ultimate] abode!
(Quran, Raad: 24)*

The above verse speaks about when the pious will come to the doors of heaven. These magnificent doors will open for them and they will be welcomed to their eternal homes in, paradise. We also note that patience is mentioned. Patience is very important in life. We need patience everywhere; patience in studies, patience in applying for university or college, patience in losing weight, patience in running a business Etc. We need to be patient in many situations.

For example, in this chapter, we find that the prophet's family-the AhlulBait (as) gave away their iftaar to the needy and patiently and went through the hunger which they faced without complaining. This verse mentions one of the rewards that they will receive for this sincere sacrifice and patience.

Patience can be divided into three categories:

1. Patience in going through calamities
2. Patience in obeying Allah (swt)
3. Patience in refraining from sin.

Imam al-Baqir (as) said "Verify, God Almighty treats the believer with tribulations in the same way as a man treats his family with gifts after he comes home from a journey. He restrains the believer from the world in the same way as the physician prescribes restraints for a sick man."

In the court of Ibne Ziyad, Sayyida Zainab (as) was asked about how she saw the calamity of Karbala. She replied, "I saw nothing but beauty." Sayyida Zainab (as) is describing the calamities saying that they are beautiful.

So in the above hadith Imam Baqir (as) is telling us that the gift of Allah (swt) for the believers is calamities and tribulations. We see the calamities as trouble. We would wish for a calamity free life. However, Sayyida Zainab (as) is calling calamities a thing of beauty and Imam Baqir (as) is calling them a gift from Allah (swt) how do we reconcile these two statements?

The explanation is that calamities and difficulties have some hidden blessings within them that we are unaware of at the time. The AhlulBait (as) are looking at calamities in another dimension which we do not see when we get afflicted by them.

Imam Ali (as) says, "Allah (swt) tests his servants with hardships and he makes them serve him by the difficulties they go through. He tests them with unpleasant affairs so that pride exits their hearts and humbleness enters their souls. These are doors which open up to his grace and the tools which lead to His forgiveness."

Imagine a person who has a good position in the community. He is well respected and successful. People praise him. What might happen? There is a possibility that pride might enter his heart. He starts thinking that he is a big man, who everyone respects. This makes him arrogant and proud. Pride is a very dangerous illness. A person who has even a very small amount of pride will be forbidden from entering paradise. So this person is effectively ruining his chances of a beautiful hereafter! Allah (swt) in his infinite mercy wants to help this man from being denied paradise by bringing awareness to this person about the mistake he is committing

This man gets struck by a calamity. For example, he loses a lot of money in his business. Then what happens? This man calls Allah (swt) for help. He realizes how dependent he is on Allah (swt) to be successful in his business. He realizes that it was because of Allah's (swt) grace that he was successful till now. He realizes he is no "big man" but a small servant of Allah (swt). He repents and he asks Allah (swt) to help him succeed again.

Sometimes we get very busy in our daily life; studies, exams, jobs, children to take care of, food to cook, etc. We forget Allah (swt). We forget that the reason why I started all of these activities was to please Allah (swt). We forget our creator. Then suddenly we get struck by a calamity, for example we fall sick. That is when we remember Allah (swt). We turn to Him. We ask Him to cure us. We feel weak. We feel dependent on Allah's (swt) mercy. We come back to the right path.

So two of the benefits of calamities were mentioned:

1) Pride exits from a person's heart

2) A person remembers Allah (swt)

Another benefit that calamities have is that they elevate a believer's station.

Before embarking on his final journey which ended in Karbala, Imam Husain (as) saw the Holy Prophet (saw). In his dream, who told him, "You have a station in paradise which you will not get to unless you get martyred." Imam Husain's (as) martyrdom was that difficulty which was the path for him to get to a very high station. Every tribulation that a believer goes through Allah (swt) rewards them for it. Allah (swt) is just. Believers are rewarded for having patience in the calamity that they have been afflicted by. If we think of calamities as a gift from Allah (swt) it will be easier for us to bear them.

patience to be able to obey Allah (swt).

It is difficult to obey Allah's (swt) to fast, especially in long and hot summer days. It requires patience.

It is difficult to recite Salaat in between classes while one is in college or at work where one has no place to pray. It requires patience.

It is difficult to observe hijab and be mocked at or stared at because of it. It requires patience.

It is sometimes difficult to perform one's duty to their parents in their old age. It is sometimes difficult to obey Allah (swt) when he does not allow the smallest disrespect to them, not even a frown with anger. It requires patience.

So how should we build patience in ourselves? One of the ways to build patience is to remember the rewards that Allah (swt) will give us for it.

For example, if a child is told he will receive ice cream for completing his homework quickly, the child will finish his homework very fast without complaining.

A student in college, who is aiming for his dream job will study and work towards that goal patiently

From the above examples, we see the child and student are looking at the end result. They know that they will receive a wonderful reward as the result of their actions.

If the patient one knew how Allah (swt) praises them in the Quran, then the task and the patience that is required for it would become very easy for them.

Allah (swt) says in Surah Ale Imran verse 146:

وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الصَّابِرِينَ

And Allah loves the patient

What a beautiful rewards for one who is practicing patience in trying times when The Lord says he loves the patient?

In Surah Baqarah verse 153 Allah (swt) says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

O you who have faith! Take recourse in patience and prayer; indeed Allah is with the patient.

Look at the emphasis in this verse. Indeed Allah (swt) is with the patient. What a pleasure it is to know that the creator not only loves you the patient one, but also has your back and is supporting you!. You are not alone in this difficulty. Your lord is with you.

If we remember that Allah (swt) is with us and if we remember that he loves us, then obeying Allah (swt) and being patient will be very easy for us.

Moreover, we should remember that Allah (swt) has honored us with duties that he has given us. If the holy Prophet (saw) or the imams would ask me to perform something for him wouldn't I be honored? Wouldn't I feel special? Wouldn't I be thankful for giving me the opportunity? Here, Allah (swt) has assigned some duties for us. We should feel honored and special. We should be thankful to Him for giving us this opportunity. If a person keeps these points in mind, the obedience of Allah (swt) will become easy and pleasurable for them.

Imam Ali (a.s) says, "The root of patience is having a certain belief in Allah (swt)."

Lessons learnt from this verse

We should learn to practice patience as this is what our creator loves and wants in us

Chapter 14: Surah Insaan verse 13

مُتَّكِئِينَ فِيهَا عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ لَا يَرَوْنَ فِيهَا شَمْسًا وَلَا زَمْهَرِيرًا

zamhariran
freezing cold

wala
and not

shamsan
any sun

fiha
therein

yarawna
they will see

la
Not

al-araiki
couches

ala
on

fiha
therein

muttakiina
Reclining

Reclining therein on couches. They will find in it neither any [scorching] sun, nor any [biting] cold.

The action **مُتَّكِئِينَ** Mutakkinna means reclining.

The word **الْأَرَائِكِ** Al-araiki means elegant couches where the believers will be seated in paradise.

Reclining points out to the peace of mind that the believers will have in paradise. Usually, when we are relaxed we recline in a comfortable spot and enjoy the peace of mind. Peace of mind is a very important blessing that the believers will have that.

Peace of mind is very important. If a person is a millionaire but has no peace of mind, is this person happy? What good does all the wealth that he has accumulated do for him, when he cannot enjoy it with any worry?

On the other hand, imagine a person who doesn't have a lot of wealth; he doesn't have a high position in society, but he has peace of mind. He lives a happy and content life. Who is the happier of these two? Of course, it is the poor person who has a peace of mind. Peace of mind is like the paradise of this world.

For one to reach peace of mind, remember Allah (swt) often. Surah Raad verse 28 says

أَلَا يَنْفَعُ اللَّهَ تَطْمِئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

Look! The hearts find rest in Allah's remembrance!

Allah (swt) is telling us in this verse;

“O people who are struggling for peace of mind! Where are you going? Are you running to earn a big amount of money thinking that it will give you peace of mind? I am telling you that you are heading in the wrong direction. Know that all those flocking to you, praising you, will abandon you the moment you lose all your wealth.

Look at my servant here. He doesn't earn much. But he has peace of mind because he knows that he has a master who is watching over him. He trusts me. He believes confidently that I have promised him his sustenance; and I will deliver it to him. That is why my servant does not lose his peace of mind even if he loses his job; because he has complete faith in me.

O people who are struggling to please others! People who think that you will reach peace of mind if everyone is satisfied with you! Know that you are headed in the wrong direction.

Look at my servant who only wants to please me. He has peace of mind because he has only one individual to please. He does not have to worry about the various views of the people and how to please all of them. He has chosen to please the most Powerful and the most Merciful. In return, I have given this servant honor. And I have made him loved among the people."

Peace of mind can be achieved by remembering Allah (swt). When we remember that our master is the most powerful and He is watching over us, we feel at peace. We try our best to study for our exams and leave the rest to our lord. Everything is in Allah's (swt) hands and he will do what is best for us.

لَا يَرَوْنَ فِيهَا شَمْسًا وَلَا زَمْهَرِيرًا

They will find in it neither any sun, nor any cold.

In paradise there will always be a beautiful weather. The days will always be pleasant. No, extreme heat, no snow storms, no hurricanes, just beautiful pleasant weather. The shade of the beautiful trees will prevent the sun from bothering the believers.

Lessons learnt from this verse

Peace of mind is very important. We can only get that if we have absolute faith in our Lord.

Peace of mind is one of the rewards in paradise

Chapter 15: Surah Insaan verse 14

وَدَانِيَةً عَلَيْهِمْ ظِلَالُهَا وَذُلِّلَتْ قُطُوفُهَا تَذَرِيلاً

tadhiliian
very low

qutufuha
its cluster of fruits

wadhullilat
and will hang low

zilaluha
(are) its shades

alayhim
above them

wadaniyatan
And near

Its shade will be near, over them and its clusters [of fruit] will be hanging low.

This verse speaks about some more of the blessings that the people in paradise will enjoy, the shade of the trees and the delicious fruits.

ظِلَالُهَا *Zilaluha* means shade The shade of the trees will be like a cover over them and protect them from the sun.

ذُلِّلَتْ *Dhullilat* means to be low. The branches of the tree will hanging low over where they are sitting, making it easy for the righteous to pluck the fruits

قُطُوفُهَا *Qutoof* (plural of *Qitf*) is referring to a cluster of ripe fruit, ready for plucking

And the delicious fruits will be hanging from the branches of the trees very close to them. The fruits will be easy to pick. There will be no need to bring a ladder or a stick to pluck the fruits. There will be no need to watch out for stinging insects on the trees. There will be no worry about getting poked by the thorns in the trees. The delicious fruits will be hanging closely to the people and they can pick them and enjoy eating them with ease and comfort. These were two more of the blessings in paradise.

Lessons learnt from this verse

In paradise there is no work to be done. If we need something, we have to get up and make an effort to get something we need or desire. In paradise, however, we just have to ask and it will come to us!

Chapter 16: Surah Insaan verses 15 & 16

وَيُطَافُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِءَانِيَةٍ مِنْ فِضَّةٍ وَأَكْوَابٍ كَانَتْ قَوَارِيرًا

qawarira (of) crystal kanat that are wa-akwabin and cups fiddatin silver min of bianiyatin vessels alayhim among them wayutafu And will be circulated

They will be served around with vessels of silver and goblets of crystal

قَوَارِيرًا مِنْ فِضَّةٍ قَدَرُوهَا تَقْدِيرًا

taqdiran measure qaddaruha They will determine its fiddatin silver min of qawarira Crystal-clear

Crystals of silver [from] which they dispense in a precise measure.

These verses speak about one of the ways of how Allah's (swt) guests will be served in paradise.

The dishes will be a variety of heavenly, delicious food, and the goblets will contain tasty, heavenly drink. The food and drinks will be plenty and will not run out as much as Allah's (swt) guests desire. And the servants will constantly come to the people and offer them delicious food and drinks in elegant dishes.

أَنِيَّة Innayatan is the plural of **اناء** which means a vessel or dish.



اَكْوَاب Akwabin is the plural of **كوب** which is a vessel of water that doesn't have a handle-A form of Goblet.



قَوَارِير Qawarira is the plural of **قاروره** which means a glass and crystal dish.

The verse is saying that there will be vessels in paradise that will be silver and crystal. The vessels in paradise will be as clear as crystal and transparent. They will have the shine of



silver. They will even be transparent! The people will be able to see the appetizing drink which rests within them.

Imam Sadiq (as) says, "The people will be able to see through silver in paradise the same way that they can see through glass in the world."

قَوَارِيرًا مِنْ فِضَّةٍ قَدَرُوهَا تَقْدِيرًا

Crystals of silver [from] which they dispense in a precise measure.

Dispensing in a precise manner means that the people in heaven will choose the size of the dish and the amount of food or water they want to be put into the dish. And when they are done with their meal, there will be nothing left in the dish. The food in the dish will be exactly the amount that they desired, not too much and not too less.

There is an important lesson for us. The people in heaven will take exactly the amount that they require. They will not waste. It is common human tendency to fill plates with food, especially in the month of Ramadhan. Then when we cannot eat any more, we simply throw the remainder in the trash. This called Israaf, or wastage! This is a trait that the people of paradise will not have. So, we better stay away from this trait too as Allah (swt) says in Surah Israa verse 27:

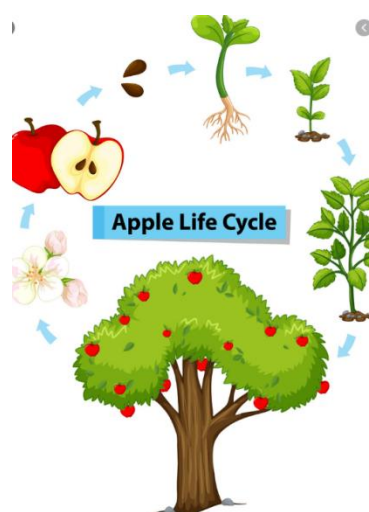
إِنَّ الْمُبَذِّرِينَ كَانُوا إِخْوَانَ الشَّيَاطِينِ وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِرَبِّهِ كَفُورًا

Indeed the wasteful are brothers of satan, and satan is ungrateful to his Lord.

This is a very powerful verse. The wasteful are called the brothers of Satan! That describes how much Allah (swt) despises wastage.

Satan is ungrateful to His Lord and so are the wasteful. Allah (swt) brought Satan to the level of the angels. He gave him the blessings (tawfeeq) to worship, becoming a teacher of the angels. But, in his arrogance and pride, he disobeyed Allah (swt). He was ungrateful. He chose to disobey the one who gave him uncountable blessings.

The wasteful are also ungrateful. They waste the blessings that Allah (swt) gave them. They eat half of the apple and throw the rest away. They let the water flow from the tap when they do not need it. They easily waste the time that Allah (swt) has blessed them with. Surely that is ungratefulness, isn't it? That is taking the blessings we have for granted.



Let us analyze and ponder how Allah (swt) made that half eaten apple reach our house. First, the small seed of a tree was planted. Then the seed split open. A little seedling made its way out of the dirt. This little plant was watered. It was taken care of. It was protected from insects and animals. The plant grew along with the fruits and And it grew...grew...and grew. Finally a day came when it was able to give apples. These apples were picked. They were put into a good environment so that they would not go bad. It was transported to our city and sold to different shops. And finally, we went to the store and bought them with the money that Allah (swt) gave us.

Allah (swt) prepared this apple for us as it went through all these stages. Is it fair if I eat half and throw the other half in the trash?

وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ Surah A'raaf verse 31

And eat and drink, but do not waste; indeed He does not like the wasteful.

So, we are allowed to enjoy the blessings Allah (swt) has given us. We are allowed to enjoy our meals... but Allah (swt) is telling us not to waste.

The second part of the verse sounds frightening. "Indeed He does not like the wasteful." That is frightening!

Imagine how low and miserable one would feel if he knew that his master and creator is unhappy with them? With who can this person seek sanctuary with? Where can he go except repenting and returning to the door of his master, Allah (swt)?



May Allah (swt) save us from being from the wasteful. We should teach our children from young age the concept of putting in their plate how much they can eat and not more.

Lessons learnt from this verse

Wasting food is from the traits of Satan. We should avoid wasting food. Paradise has a range of Special cutlery created by Allah the like of which is beyond imagination

Chapter 17: Surah Insaan verses 17 & 18

وَيُسْقَوْنَ فِيهَا كَأْسًا كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا زَنْجَبِيلًا
zanjabilan mizajuha kana kasan fiha wayus'qawna
(of) Zanjabil its mixture is a cup therein And they will be given to drink

17. They will be served therein with a cup of a drink seasoned with Zanjabil,

This verse mentions another blessing that the believers in paradise will receive- a cup **كَأْسٍ** Kasan of a drink which will be seasoned with zanjabil.

زَنْجَبِيلٍ zanjabil means Ginger, which gives a drink a spicy taste. Zana means ascending and Jabil means a mountain. Hence the word means that Ginger is a healing and strengthening herb that gives one the strength to even climb mountains.

Here, the Holy Quran speaks about a pure drink which will have a similar flavor and will be served to the believers in paradise.

A point to be made here is that life in paradise is very different from the life in this world. The blessings provided there are unimaginable. They are so beautiful that our minds cannot even fathom. According to the traditions the blessings there are such that no eyes have seen, no ears have heard and no mind has conceived. They cannot be compared to the blessings Allah (swt) has given us in this world. So what we are imagining when our mind tries to picture Paradise is nothing compared to the "real deal" The blessings there are a lot better than what we're imagining.

عَيْنًا فِيهَا تُسَمَّى سَلْسَبِيلًا
salsabilan tusamma fiha aynan
Salsabil named therein A spring

18. There will be a spring in paradise which will be named Salsabil.

The **كَأْسٍ** Kasan or cups will be filled by this spring.

سَلْسَبِيلٌ *Salsabil is a spring in paradise that is easily accessible. It literally means a tasty pleasant drink that softly passes through the mouth and the throat.*



Lessons learnt from this verse

Paradise will have a spring, where cups of delicious drinks will be filled and served to the dwellers of paradise. The taste will be exquisite, unlike the taste of any drink on earth

Chapter 18: Surah Insaan verses 19&20

وَيَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ وِلْدَانٌ مُّخَلَّدُونَ إِذَا رَأَيْتَهُمْ حَسِبْتَهُمْ لُؤْلُؤًا مَّنثُورًا

manthuran lu'lu-an hasib'tahum ra-aytahum idha mukhalladuna wil'danun alayhim wayatufu
scattered (as) pearls you would think them you see them When made eternal young boys among them And will circulate

They will be waited upon by immortal youths, whom, when you see them, you will suppose them to be scattered pearls.

يَطُوفُ Yatufu means the immortal youth will circulate amongst the believers

مُخَلَّدُونَ Mukhalladun means eternal or immortal

لُؤْلُؤٌ Luluan. Pearls hard and shiny

Immortal youths will be going around the believers in paradise ready to serve them. These servants will be so beautiful and impressive, that they will look like scattered pearls. Their face will be glowing.

وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَ ثُمَّ رَأَيْتَ نَعِيمًا وَمُلْكًا كَبِيرًا

kabiran wamul'kan na'im ra-ayta thamma ra-ayta wa-idha
great and a kingdom blessings you will see then you look And when

And when you look, you will see blessings and a great kingdom.

1. **نَعِيم** Niama means blessings. The verse is saying that there are so many blessings in paradise that one cannot describe their abundance. Whatever the believers wish for in paradise' will happen.
2. **مَلِكٌ كَبِيرٌ** Mulkan Kabeera means a great kingdom, which is so beautiful and enormous, that it will take thousands of years to traverse. There is nothing like this in this world or anything one can imagine. Imam Sadiq (as) says that this verse is speaking about a kingdom which will never perish and is eternal.



Lessons learnt from this verse

Paradise is an eternal kingdom, where all wishes will be fulfilled.

Immortal youth with bright faces at the service of the dwellers of paradise, fulfilling their every command.

Chapter 19: Surah Insaan verse 21

عَالِيَهُمْ ثِيَابٌ سُنْدُسٌ خُضْرٌ وَإِسْتَبْرَقٌ وَحُلُّوا أَسَاوِرَ مِنْ فِضَّةٍ

fiddatin min asawira wahullu wa-is'tabraqun khud'rūn sundusin thiyabu aliyahum
silver of (with) bracelets And they will be adorned and heavy brocade green (of) fine silk (will be) garments Upon them

وَسَقَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ شَرَابًا طَهُورًا

tahuran sharaban rabbuhum wasaqahum
pure a drink their Lord and will give them to drink

Upon them will be cloaks of green silk and brocade and they will be adorned with bracelets of silver. Their Lord will give them to drink a pure drink,

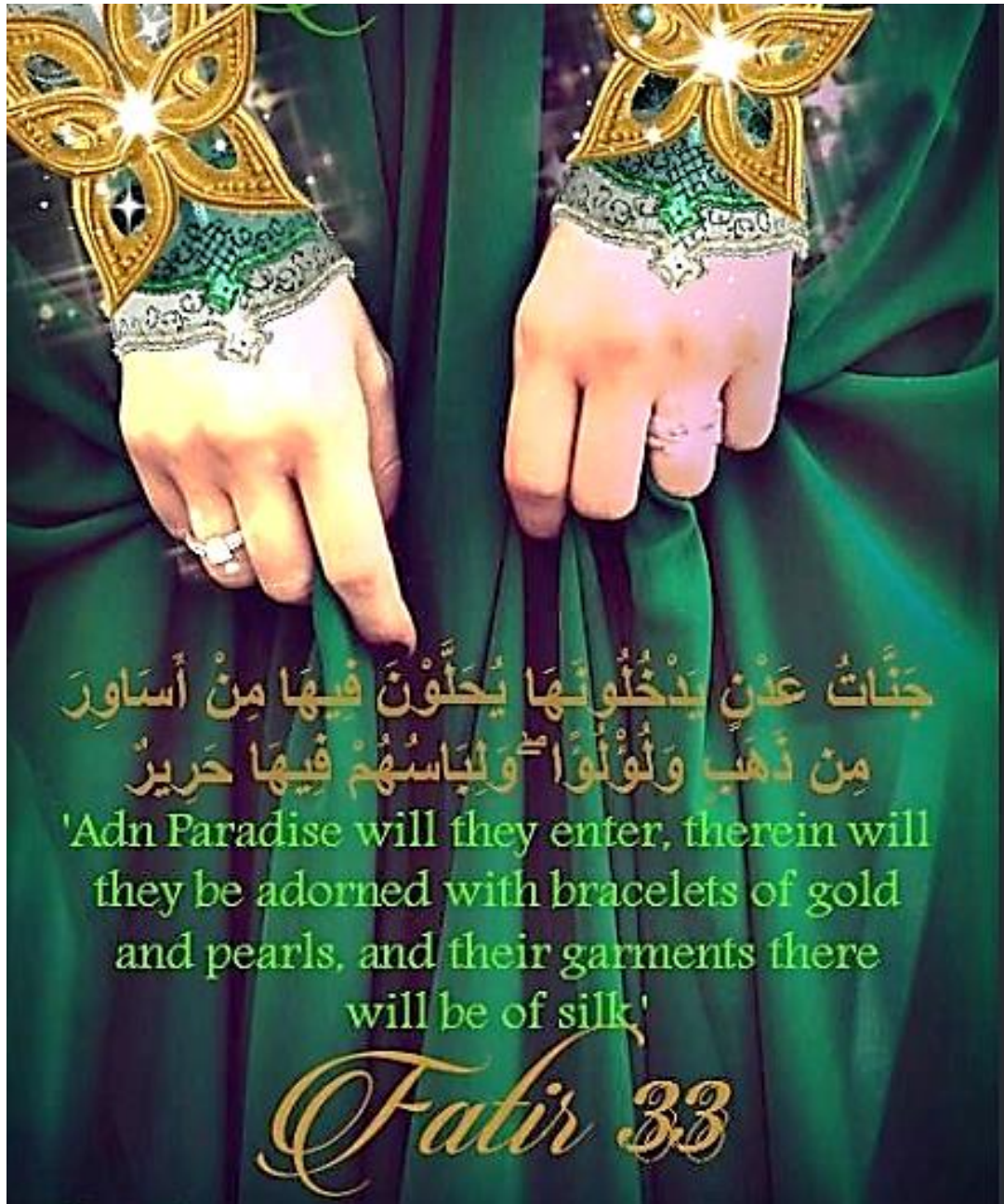
Previously, we spoke about the couches, the cool shadows, the delightful drinks, the delicious fruits, the gorgeous dishes, the servants, etc. Now this verse speaks about the garments and the ornaments of the believers in paradise.

سُنْدُسٍ *Sundusin* is a fabric of thin silk

إِسْتَبْرَقٌ *Istabraqun* is a thick silk fabric called brocade woven with a raised pattern, typically with gold or silver thread. The believers will be adorned with cloaks made out of beautiful silky fabrics.

The color of their cloaks will be green **خُضْرٌ** *Khudhrun*. The color green gives us happiness the same way that the lush green leaves of trees and beautiful green grass give us give us pleasure. Think of the joy and pleasure we feel in spring when all the trees grow small green leaves again and the brown grass starts showing shades of green. Think of the pleasure we get when we go to visit a place which is covered with natural green beauty. We usually say, "It was so beautiful! It was so green!" Also, the color green has different shades. We have dark green, light green, yellow green, lush green, etc. Each shade of green has a different beauty.

The believers in paradise will also be gifted with bracelets of silver. Remember, this silver will be nothing like the silver in this world. These beautiful bracelets will be made out of clear silver which will shine like crystal. It will be even more beautiful than rubies and pearls.



جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ يَدْخُلُونَهَا يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيهَا مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ
مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَلُؤْلُؤًا وَلِبَاسُهُمْ فِيهَا حَرِيرٌ

'Adn Paradise will they enter, therein will
they be adorned with bracelets of gold
and pearls, and their garments there
will be of silk.'

Fatir 33

Finally, the verse ends with a beautiful sentence. It mentions the last and most important blessing of paradise which is mentioned in this beautiful chapter of the Holy Quran. It says:

وَسَقَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ شَرَابًا طَهُورًا

Their Lord will give them to drink a pure drink,

Earlier we spoke about some delightful drinks which the people in paradise will be served with. We spoke about the gorgeous vessels which will be filled with the river of "salsabil." The drinks which we spoke about earlier were being served by immortal youths. But the one who is serving this drink is Allah (swt) himself. Subhan Allah! The master of the universe is offering this pure drink to his servants. What a pleasure it is to be hosted by Allah (swt)!

And look at the beautiful word that Allah (swt) uses to describe Him. He uses رَبُّهُمْ, "Rabuhum" "Their Lord" will give them to drink a pure drink,

رَبُّ Rabb means the one who nourishes, raises, teaches and guides his servant throughout his life, eventually bringing him to salvation; He is now offering them this pure drink Himself. What a joyful moment that will be!

طَهُور Tahuran is something that is pure itself and it purifies. This word has only been used twice in the Holy Quran. Once, it has been used for rain which is pure and purifies and gives life to everything, while the second time it has been used for this heavenly drink which will be given by Allah (swt). It will be pure and it will purify the souls.

Imam Sadiq (as) says, "It (this drink) will purify their hearts and will tear the veils that are hindering them from being in Allah's (swt) presence. It will give the believers the honor to be close to Allah (swt).

Lessons learnt from this verse

Allah Will adorn the dwellers of paradise with garments of special green silk and will himself offer

Chapter 20: Surah Insaan verse 22

إِنَّ هَذَا كَانَ لَكُمْ جَزَاءً وَكَانَ سَعْيُكُمْ مَشْكُورًا

mashkuran
appreciated

sa'yukum
your effort

wakana
and has been

jazaan
a reward

lakum
for you

kana
is

hadha
this

inna
Indeed

[They will be told]: "This is indeed your reward, and your endeavor has been well-appreciated."

What a wonderful feeling it is to hear Allah (swt) and the angels appreciating a person's actions. That is something, being appreciated by Allah (swt).

*In this verse, we see that the verb كَانَ Kana is used which is past tense. Allah (swt) says, "and your endeavor **has been** well-appreciated." This might be pointing to the fact that Allah (swt) had prepared these blessings for the people in paradise a long time before they entered paradise. This shows the importance that Allah (swt) is giving to his guests.*

When we know that we are going to have guests who we love and give importance to, we prepare everything they need beforehand. We make the house comfortable for them and make them feel welcome. Similarly Allah (swt) prepares everything long before the believers enter paradise. This shows the importance he is giving to them.

However, it should be pointed out that Allah (swt) is appreciating the believers' hard work in the world. These wonderful blessings are not just earned easily. The hard work in this world, abstaining from sin, performing the obligatory actions, enduring all the mocking, the insults and all the struggles which the believers face, result in the eternal pleasure of the hereafter. These rewards are earned by effort

In the preceding verses, Allah (swt) promises the believers

A garden and garments of silk,

Couches where they will recline on with total peace of mind.

Protection from scorching heat and biting cold.

Branches of the trees will be close to the believers, providing them with a pleasant shade and an easy access to fruits on these trees.

They will be served food in silver dishes and cups made out of crystal

They will be served by youth whenever they wish.

They will have the best of drinks served to them

What can we see from the above? These verses clearly show how Allah (swt) answers every need we have. He has prepared everything which we take pleasure in for us. He is surely the Most Merciful.

When we go for a picnic, we find the most scenic park. We look for an area which has the best shade. We bring nice comfortable chairs. We eat the most delicious food.

These small pleasures and desires are abundantly and amply rewarded to us in paradise. Allah (swt) knows what we like and he generously provides these for us. What a kind and generous lord!

Lessons learnt from this verse

Allah (swt) appreciates all our sacrifices in abstaining from what he has forbidden and all our actions. Hence he has already prepared our rewards.

Chapter 21: Surah Insaan verse 23

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ تَنْزِيلًا

tanzilan	al-qur'ana	alayka	nazzalna	nahnu	inna
progressively	the Quran	to you	[We] revealed	[We]	Indeed We

Indeed we have sent down to you the Qur'an in a gradual descent.

Question: Why was the Holy Quran revealed gradually? Why wasn't it descended to the Holy Prophet at once?

Answer: The Qur'an has got two kinds of revelation:

A) Instant revelation on the heart of the Prophet (S) that occurred in the night of Power (Qadr) when all of the Qur'an was sent down to the Prophet's heart.

B) Gradual revelation that the Qur'an was sent down on special occasions during 23 years.

تَنْزِيلًا *Tanzil* points out to the fact that the Holy Quran was revealed gradually .

Gradual revelation the Holy Quran

Two words used in the holy Qur'n in this regard; Inzal and Tanzeel.

Inzal means: transmission in one occasion **إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ** while Tanzeel means gradual revelation **"وَنَزَّلْنَاهُ تَنْزِيلًا"**.

;The holy Qura'n was transmitted twice

.Full transmission

.Gradual revelation

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْ لَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ الْقُرْآنُ جُمْلَةً وَاحِدَةً كَذَلِكَ لِنُثَبِّتَ بِهِ فُؤَادَكَ وَرَتَّلْنَاهُ تَرْتِيلًا

The faithless say, "Why has not the Qur'an been sent down to him (prophet) all at once?" So it is that we may strengthen your heart with it, and we have recited it [to you] in a measured tone.

The gradual descent of the Holy Quran resulted in the continuous deep connection between Allah (swt) and the Holy Prophet (saw). This connection would give him strength and comfort

Which one would one prefer when a loved one is out of town for a month- To speak to him/her for a marathon 3 hours and then no communication for the rest of the month? Or to speak for a short time each day, every day ?

Surely the second option is more appealing and comforting. One feels at peace and gains strength whenever they are connected to their loved ones; they prefer this relationship to be continuous even if it is short. This is what the continuous connection that the Holy Prophet (saw) had with Allah (swt) by receiving his holy words regularly would strengthen his heart.

The gradual descent of the Holy Quran would give peace to the Muslims too. They would feel that Allah (swt) is constantly aware of their state and they are under his protection. There are verses in the Quran which describe the victories and difficulties of the Muslims. These verses even mention the thoughts that passed from some people's minds in these conditions. In these moments, the Muslims must have felt a strong connection with their creator who is watching over them and knows their every thought.

Since the Quran was revealed gradually it was easier for the Muslims to memorize it. They would try to memorize each verse when it was revealed. This also saved the Quran from distortion. Since many of the Muslims knew the Quran by heart, if anyone would make a mistake in reciting the Quran they would correct that person right away.

When many people know a certain script by heart, it becomes impossible for the enemies to make any changes in it because they will be caught out right away. The memorization of the holy Quran helped saving it from distortion and alteration and this was made easier by the gradual revelation of the Quran.

Some of the verses of Quran were revealed after an incident in history and were related to that incident. For example, they replied to the questions of the Jews, Christians and unbelievers. They were also revealed after battles like the battle of Badr, Uhud and Ahzab.

The gradual revelation of the verses of Quran resulted in a higher spiritual effect on the Muslims. Each verse of the Quran which was revealed had lessons to ponder about, or rules to practice, etc. Since the revelation was gradual the Muslims had a higher chance to ponder on the verse revealed and learn to practice the rules. The Muslims were guided gradually and step by step through the levels of spirituality.

Thus it can be seen that the gradual revelation of the verses of the Quran was more beneficial and better.

Lessons learnt from this verse

The Quran was transmitted once to the holy Prophet (saw) on the night of Qadr in Ramadhan

The Quran was also transmitted gradually during the 23 years when Prophet Muhammad (saw) Preached Islam.

Gradual revelation brought the prophet and the Muslims comfort and a sense of connection to Allah (swt)

The gradual revelation made it easier to memorize the verses of the holy book

It became impossible for the enemies of Islam to make Distortions and any attempt was quickly caught

Some of the verses of Quran were revealed after an incident in history and were related to that incident.

Chapter 22: Surah Insaan verse 24

فَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ وَلَا تُطِعْ مِنْهُمْ ءَاثِمًا أَوْ كَفُورًا

kafuran	aw	athiman	min'hum	tuti'	wala	rabbika	lihuk'mi	fa-is'bir
disbeliever	or	any sinner	from them	obey	and (do) not	(of) your Lord	for (the) Command	So be patient

So be patient to the command of your Lord, and do not obey any sinner or disbeliever from among them

فَاصْبِرْ *Faisbir* means “So be patient”, the instruction for patience follows the mention of the revelation of the Qur'an by Allah.

This verse says since this holy book is revealed by Allah (swt), the holy Prophet should obey all the commands that are mentioned in it. This verse addresses us too. We should also keep in mind that the commands of the Holy Quran are the commands of Allah (swt) our master and creator; so we should certainly obey them.

It is like if one of my colleagues at the office, who has an equal or lower rank, commands me to do something, I do not always have to follow the command. However, if my manager commands me to do something, this command is important. I will have to obey and take it seriously. Similarly, the holy Quran contains the commands of the creator and the master of the whole universe. It contains the commands of the most powerful. How is it that someone can easily listen to his office manager but it becomes difficult for him to obey his lord who created him and on whom he is dependent on?

We should take the commands of the Holy Quran seriously. The Quran commands us to wear hijab. We should obey; the Quran commands us to eat halaal; we should obey. The Quran commands us to respect our parents; we should obey. The Quran commands us to refrain from backbiting; we should obey. These are the commands of our master and creator.

Some say that this verse is linked to the previous verse and speaks about Allah's (swt) support for the Holy Prophet (saw). In other words it says since the Quran has been revealed by Allah (swt) and he is your protector, so be patient in obeying His commands.

وَلَا تُطِيعُوا مِنْهُمْ آثِمًا أَوْ كَافُورًا

..and do not obey any sinner or ungrateful among them

The non-believers used different ways to try to stop the Holy Prophet (saw) from preaching Islam. They tried to bribe him by offering him massive amounts of wealth and the most beautiful women in Arabia. The non-believers were not able to tempt the Prophet (saw) however much they tried. The Holy Prophet (saw) told them, "If you put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left, to stop me from inviting the people to this religion, I will not stop inviting them until death embraces me." This is how strong our Holy Prophet (saw) was. Even if they would put all the riches in the world under his possession they still could not stop him from calling the people to Islam.

We should learn from our dear Prophet (saw). If someone offers us a bribe, we should refrain from taking it, in the obedience of Allah (swt). The Holy Prophet (saw) preferred, going through difficulties, rather than enjoying the riches the unbelievers offered him. He refused to submit to their will even if he was given all the riches of the world.

When the unbelievers realized that bribing the holy Prophet (saw) had no effect, they started torturing the Muslims and the Holy Prophet (saw). They boycotted and banished the Muslims from Mecca. The Muslims had to live in dire conditions, without food and shelter in the outskirts of the city. In this difficult time, the Holy Prophet (saw) lost his dear wife, Sayyida Khadija and his uncle, Hadhrat Abu Talib. This was so difficult for the Holy Prophet (saw) that he named that year "Aam ulHuzn," "the year of sorrow." However, these setbacks did not stop him from continuing with his responsibility and mission in inviting the people to Islam. Surely, the Prophet (saw) followed this verse in the best possible way.

We should follow our Holy Prophet (saw). If we are threatened about losing friends by not participating in sinful acts that they call us to, we should sacrifice the friendship for the sake of Allah (swt). After all, Allah (swt) is the best of providers and the best companion one can have. He suffices us. When Sayyida Khadija (saw) was giving birth to Sayyida Fatimah (as), the ladies in Mecca refused to aid her because she was the wife of the holy Prophet (saw). It is very difficult for a woman to be alone in these moments. However, Allah (swt) sent heavenly ladies to her help. Allah (swt) surely suffices those who rely on him and are lonely because they are following his religion.

Another point which we can learn from this verse is that "ungrateful" is mentioned after "sinner" even though the ungrateful fit in the category of sinners. However, we find the holy Quran mentioning the ungrateful and emphasizing on the point that they should not be obeyed. This rule (disobedience) applies to the people who are sinners and unbelievers, as well as the people

who are sinners but believers or vice versa. Who are these people? The holy Quran might be referring to the Muslims who are sinners. They should also not be obeyed.

*We can conclude that this part of the verse interprets the previous part of it. **“So submit patiently to the command of your Lord, and do not obey any sinner or ungrateful among them.”** It says that we should obey Allah (swt) and should not obey any sinner even if they are Muslim when they call us to disobey Allah (swt); and we should not obey the ungrateful (unbelievers) when they are asking us to do something which clashes with Allah’s (swt) command.*

Sometimes in the course of our various interactions, we might have some relationships with non-Muslims. We should be careful that peer pressure should not force us to obey our friends and disobey our master and creator. Sometimes it might be difficult to refuse attending parties; it might be difficult to abstain from what they are eating; it might be difficult to dress differently than them; it might be difficult to have different beliefs and practices than them; it might be difficult to always be the odd one out; however we should remember that we are not alone and the Lord of the whole universe is our constant companion and is always by our side What a pleasure that thought brings to one’s mind!

A more difficult scenario is when God forbid, the one who calls us towards sin is a Muslim! According to this verse we cannot obey these people to sin either. We might be told it is ok to hug your distant cousin. Even on the blessed day of weddings, a Muslim will come and convince you that it is your day, a bit of music and dancing is ok. We forget that wedding days are blessed days and nights. We are starting a new journey. How can one start a new journey with sins and disobedience to his or her Lord? However, Allah (swt) commands us to disobey these people when they call us to sin. In these moments, we have to hold fast to the obedience of Allah (swt) and ask Him for help in tackling these difficulties. We should not disobey our creator just to please people, as we will bear the consequences of the sin.

Lessons learnt from this verse

Do not disobey Allah (swt) at any cost. There may be pressure from friends and even family, but one must stay in obedience. DO not obey the call to sin. In the end you will be answerable!

Chapter 23: Surah Insaan verses 25&26

وَإِذْكُرِ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا

wa-asilan buk'ratan rabbika is'ma wa-udh'kuri
and evening morning (of) your Lord (the) name And remember

And remember the Name of your Lord Morning and evening,

وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَاسْجُدْ لَهُ وَسَبِّحْهُ لَيْلًا طَوِيلًا

tawilan laylan wasabbih'hu lahu fa-us'jud al-layli wamina
long a night and glorify Him to Him prostrate the night And of

And during the night prostrate to Him; and glorify Him (a) long (part of the) night."

The previous verse commanded the Holy Prophet (saw) to submit patiently to the command of Allah (swt), and not obey any sinner or ungrateful one. Since it is difficult to obey these commands, the next two verses mention two ways for one to get stronger and overcome these tasks successfully.

بُكْرَةً *Bukratan* means the beginning of the day.

أَصِيلًا *Asilan* means the end of the day.

These verses speak about the necessity of remembering Allah (swt) throughout the whole day. If one continuously remembers Allah (swt) and feels His presence, they will not sin. How can one sin in the presence of their master and creator? Take for example a child who will be shy to disobey his teacher in when the teacher is present, but sometimes disobeys the teacher when the teacher is not looking. However, unlike the teacher or anybody else for that matter, Allah (swt) is always watching and aware what is servant is doing or even thinking. We should always remember that.

And during the night prostrate to Him; and glorify Him (a) long (part of the) night."

النَّيْلِ طَوِيلٍ *Laylan tawilan* means, one should spend a long portion of the night in the remembrance of Allah (swt).

What is the meaning of glorification in **سَبَّحَهُ**, *Wassabihtu* (glorify Him)?

Imam Ridha (as) was asked this question, he replied, “(The verse is referring to) the night prayer.” *Salatullayl* (the night prayer) is prayed between midnight to fajr. It has eleven rakat; with 5 sets of prayers, each set is two rakat in addition to one last prayer which is one rakat.

These prayers are highly recommended. They are so spiritually uplifting that it was obligatory for the Holy Prophet (saw) to pray them. The rewards for praying the night prayer are too much to be counted

“Who forsake their beds to supplicate to their Lord in fear and hope ... (Quran 32:16)

Usually in the period between midnight and the morning prayers people have a break from daily activities; they have peace of mind. In the midst of the night people are in a deep sleep; silence is spread throughout the city; these are the best moments when one can speak to their master privately and build a strong relationship with Him. They can gain power to avoid sins and not obey the tempting calls of sinners. If it is difficult for one to pray the eleven rakat, then it is good if one can pray a few of them. It is good for example to pray the first two rakat as *Nafila shab* and the last three rakat which are called *Shaf'* (two rakat) and *Witr* (one rakat). The link below explains the method of praying the night prayer:

<http://www.duas.org/pdfs/salatlail.pdf>



Lessons learnt from this verse

Remember Allah (swt) at all times. That is an effective deterrence against committing sins

The night prayer is an effective and highly rewarding way to remember Allah (swt)

Chapter 24: Surah Insaan verse 27

إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ يُحِبُّونَ الْعَاجِلَةَ وَيَذَرُونَ وَرَاءَهُمْ يَوْمًا ثَقِيلًا

thaqilan
grave

yawman
a Day

waraahum
behind them

wayadharuna
and leave

al-'ajilata
the immediate

yuhubbuna
love

haulai
these

inna
Indeed

Indeed they love this transitory life, and disregard a weighty day behind them.

In this verse, the pronoun **هَؤُلَاءِ** *Haulai* (they) refers to the sinners and ungrateful who we spoke about in verse 24; these people love this transitory world and disregard a weighty or grave day ahead of them.

“A weighty day” refers to the Day of Judgment. The severity and difficulty of that day is similar to a “weighty” load which cannot be carried; that is why the Quran refers to it as a “weighty day.”

وَرَاءَهُمْ *Waraahum* means “behind.” According to this translation, the verse says that the sinners and ungrateful leave the Day of Judgment “behind” them even though this day is actually in the future and ahead of them. Why? That is because the sinners and ungrateful ignore the Day of Judgment and cast it behind them; they act as if it does not exist ahead of them.

May Allah (swt) protect us from being in this group, those who indulge in the transitory world and ignore a difficult day which they will surely face.

Lessons learnt from this verse

The sinners do not think the day of accounting as important and leave it behind in their thoughts.

Chapter 25: Surah Insaan verse 28

نَحْنُ خَلَقْنَاهُمْ وَشَدَدْنَا أَسْرَهُمْ وَإِذَا شِئْنَا بَدَّلْنَا أَمْثَلَهُمْ تَبْدِيلًا

tabdilan amthalahum baddalna sh'na wa-idha asrahum washadadna khalaqnahum nahnu
(with) a change their likeness[es] We can change We will and when their forms and We strengthened created them We

We created them and made their joints firm, and whenever we like we will replace them with others like them.

This verse also refers to the ungrateful and sinners who we talked about in the previous verses.



The word “شد” *Shadadna* means “to fasten.”

The word “أسر” *Asar* means “to tie,” such as tying with a rope or chain. and that is why 'captives' are called 'asir' in Arabic.

So, the verse says that Allah (swt) fastened and tied together the human's joints with muscles and tendons. Hundreds of muscles are connected so firmly that they have made one unit, a human body. These muscles have an important role in human's strength and movement. Even the heart which works every day without a break is a small muscle which is necessary to keep the body alive. SubhanAllah!

This verse mentions how Allah (swt) created the joints firm. However, even though these joints are fastened firmly they still have room for movement. Imagine if the muscles were attached so tightly that they would prevent us from movement, we would become like a soft statue. On the other hand, imagine if they were attached loosely and they would fall off while throwing a ball! Nevertheless, Allah (swt) created the humans with a balance. For example, their muscles are tightly fastened to one another but they still allow movement. SubhanAllah! What a magnificent creator

This verse speaks to the sinners and ungrateful and reminds them not to feel proud by their strength and power. Muscles have an important role in strength- because it was given by Allah (swt). He was the one who provided them with power. How can they think that they can overpower him?! This verse reminds the readers of the Holy Quran that no matter how disobedient the sinners and ungrateful are they are still the creations of Allah (swt); they can never overpower him. He is the one who created them and made their joints firm and He has the

power to take away their strength; they are dependent on Him. Whenever Allah (swt) wishes He can take away their lives and replace them with the next generation.

In this verse, Allah (swt) reminds the people that their disobedience does not harm him; neither does their obedience benefit Him. Allah (swt) is needless and we are needy of him. So, if we disobey Allah (swt) we are only harming ourselves and if we obey Allah (swt) we are benefiting.

For example, a person decides not to take advantage of the sun rays. He closes the drapes of his house windows preventing the sunlight from coming in. Does this action affect the power of the Sun in any way? The person is only harming himself by denying the benefits of the Sun eg. Vitamin D. The sun does not need the person, but the person needs the Sun.

On the other hand, if someone takes advantage of sunlight it makes no difference to the sun; that person is benefiting. Similarly, Allah (swt) is needless; He does not need our fasts, prayers and other good deeds. However, we need those deeds to connect to Allah (swt) and to reach perfection. Allah (swt) has provided us a lot of potential. We need to connect to him and reach the highest station which he has planned for us. So, we should never think that the prayers and obligatory acts we do are a favor to Allah (swt). The prayers and the obligatory actions we do are as a result of the guidance and help of Allah (swt). Moreover, these benefit us in so many ways. We should be thankful to Allah (swt) for guiding us and giving us obligations which are necessary for us to reach perfection.

Sometimes, many people complain that Islam is too restrictive. Too many things are forbidden. However, if one ponders and researches, it will be seen that the Haraam actions are not good for us, either physically, socially or spiritually. Think of all of the things that are created halaal in this world. Think of all of the actions that are halaal. For example, if dancing is haram, there are other ways besides dancing that a person can experience pleasure. He can play sports or go and watch a game. He can go for picnic, take a walk and enjoy nature; there are so many other ways to seek pleasure which Allah (swt) has made halaal for us. The amount of haraam actions is very small compared to it. Furthermore, according to this hadith, Allah (swt) has prepared a great reward for us in refraining from haraam. Moreover, Allah (swt) prevents us from haraam because it is harmful to us and stops us from reaching perfection. Surely, He is the most merciful.

Lessons learnt from this verse

Humans can never overpower Allah (swt). Their perceived power is no match for the Lord
There are many ways to enjoy life the halaal way.

Haraam actions are forbidden for a reason. Our Lord loves and cares for us

Chapter 26: Surah Insaan verse 29

إِنَّ هَذِهِ تَذْكِرَةٌ فَمَنْ شَاءَ اتَّخَذَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ سَبِيلًا

sabilan	rabbihi	ila	ittakhadha	shaa	faman	tadhkiratun	hadhihi	inna
a way	his Lord	to	let him take	wills	so whoever	(is) a reminder	this	Indeed

This is indeed a reminder. So let anyone who wills, take a way toward his Lord.

This verse refers to all of the previous verses in this surah which show the path to salvation; now, it is up to us to accept this path.

*The word تَذْكِرَةٌ **Tadhkiratun** means a reminder.*

This verse has a message similar to the third verse of this surah which spoke about man's freewill. "Indeed we have guided him to the way, be he grateful or ungrateful." The 29th verse of this surah also says that Allah (swt) only guides people to the path of salvation; it is up to them to use their intellect and freewill and choose this path thankfully or refuse it ungratefully.

Lessons learnt from this verse

Man is again reminded to take a path to Allah (swt) using his intellect and reasoning.

Chapter 27: Surah Insaan verse 30

وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا

hakiman	aliman	kana	al-laha	inna	al-lahu	yashaa	an	illa	tashauna	wama
All-Wise	All-Knower	is	Allah	Indeed	Allah	wills	that	except	you will	And not

But you do not wish unless it is wished by Allah. Indeed Allah is all-knowing, all-wise.

This verse says that man is dependent on Allah (swt). If one only looks at this verse they might think that man does not have freewill and that he is only Allah's puppet, doing whatever Allah wishes. On the other hand, if one only looks at the previous verse they might conclude that man is totally independent and Allah (swt) has no authority in man's will. However, the verses of the Quran have to be interpreted with one another. So, the interpretation of these two verses would be: people have the ability to choose their actions but they are dependent on Allah (swt) as well.

These verses explain that people are not completely independent, but rather their freewill is from Allah (swt); Allah (swt) decided to give them the ability of having freewill and whenever He wants He has the power to take away this ability from them. So, people have freewill and can decide if they want to choose the path to perfection or reject it, live thankfully or ungratefully, receive indescribable everlasting rewards or temporary pleasures with painful punishments. People have freedom of decision but they are not completely independent; they are still needy of Allah's (swt) guidance and mercy.

For example, a mother tells her child, 'Tonight I will take you wherever you like.' This mother has given the child freewill to go to a place of his choosing. However, the mother has the final authority. The child may ask to go see a movie. However, the mother will decide which movie is suitable for the child. The power given to the child is limited as the mother knows which movies will be good for him and which are not good.

Allah (swt) is the all-powerful; He has given people authority to choose their actions but he has the power to take it away from them at any time. The power and strength that Allah (swt) has given people is limited. We can select which path we want to take, which actions we want to perform, but in his kindness and mercy, he decides if the action is good for us or will it take us to destruction.

Lessons learnt from this verse

People can choose their actions but they are dependent on Allah (swt) as well.

Chapter 28: Surah Insaan verse 31

يُدْخِلُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ وَالظَّالِمِينَ أَعَدَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا

aliman	adhaban	lahum	a'adda	wal-zalimina	rahmatihi	fi	yashau	man	yud'khilu
painful	a punishment	for them	He has prepared	but (for) the wrongdoers	His mercy	to	He wills	whom	He admits

He admits whomever He wishes into His mercy, and as for the wrongdoers, He has prepared for them a painful punishment.

This final verse of this chapter, speaks about the fate of the righteous and the wrongdoers.

The verse begins by showing the power of Allah's (swt) will: He admits whomever He wishes into His mercy. However, it ends by showing that Allah's (swt) will for reward or punishment follows a person's will to be from the righteous or the wrongdoers: and as for the wrongdoers, He has prepared for them a painful punishment." So, the punishment of the wrongdoers is prepared by their own will and actions; they decide to choose the path which leads to Allah's (swt) will to punish them. On the other hand, the reward of the righteous is also the result of their will and actions. So, this verse also speaks about man's freewill; depending on the decisions and actions which man does with his freewill Allah (swt) wills to punish or reward him.

Lessons learnt from this verse

A Painful punishment awaits the wrong doers. So we should be careful in our actions



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